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THE TRISTAN SAGA IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

by

WILLARD GROSVENOR BLEYER B.L.

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of

MASTER OF LETTERS

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

1898

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INTRODUCTION

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Introduction.

Of all the mediaeval romances scarcely any enjoyed a greater popularity than did that of Tristan and Iseult.[1] Some form of the story in prose or verse is to be found in the literature of almost every people of Europe from the Faroe Islands to Greece and Bohemia, and from Norway to Italy and Spain. This great epic of love, becoming as it did the exemplification of certain ideals of chivalry, evidently satisfied the imagination of the mediaeval mind as scarcely any other series of legends has done. It may be said to be an expression of the purely secular side of knighthood as the Graal saga and the legends of Arthur and Percival embodied the religious and moral aspirations of the age. In contrast to these religious and moral ideals but not necessarily opposed to them, it glorified the passion of love, and the faithfulness of the immortal lovers. The love-potion, belief in which presented no difficulty to the mediaeval mind, removed these victims of fate beyond the sphere of the moral law, and made them the great types of true lovers. The poets of the middle age were so impressed by the tragic des-

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[1]This form of the names is used throughout the paper except where reference is made to particular works that have other forms.

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tiny of these heroic characters that they did not moralize upon the character of their attachment, nor were they troubled by the difficulties that present themselves to the modern mind. In reading the story to-day the questions that suggest themselves are whether the lovers, who were the involuntary victims of the love-potion, should be praised for a faithfulness for which they were not responsible; or if the responsibility of the love-potion is not emphasized whether a life long slavery to passion is any more commendable.

Religious and moral considerations are completely absent from the story. Tristan represents the ideal knight on the secular side of chivalry, without the religious aspirations of the Knights of the Round Table, but nevertheless as chivalrous, generous, and courteous as they. He was the greatest of hunters, the master of the art of venery; the best of harpers; and matchless as a knight in the lists. These attributes together with that of great physical beauty made him take on the heroic proportions that placed him beside King Arthur as the highest type of knighthood. And Iseult in her matchless beauty and attractions became the mediaeval Helen, and at the same time a martyr to her faithful love. To the ideal character of the story as well as to the dramatic power of the events with which it deals was due its popularity

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In view of this wide-spread popularity it seems rather remarkable that the Tristan saga should play such a small role in English literature; especially is this true when, as we shall see, the story very probably originated on British soil and was given its permanent form by Anglo-Norman poets. But like the Arthurian legends, the Tristan romance failed to find a master poet in the Middle Ages to establish its place in English literature. The influence of the conquest and the almost complete establishment of the French language affected the course of English song, down to the time of Chaucer, when the new Italian influence began, and the time for a mediaeval epic had passed. The author of "Sir Tristrem" made an heroic effort to give the romance to his countrymen in their own tongue, but his poetical genius was not equal to the task, and almost within his own generation it was discarded as "quaint English". As far as can be determined his poem never inspired another English poet to treat the subject.

Malory, two centuries later, in his valuable compilation of Arthurian legends, included the Tristan story, but succeeded in intertwining inseparably the threads of the legend with those of the Arthur story; and also chose the least po-

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etical and dramatic forms of the story. Though the Morte d'Arthur has proven a rich mine for the poets seeking for the treasures of Arthurian legends, none have been led to that of Tristan with the exception of Tennyson, who in a form changed almost beyond recognition embodies it incidentally in one of the Idylls of the King. With the exception of the brief mention of the hero in the Fairie Queen, the Tristan saga disappears completely from English literature until the mediaeval revival, and it was not until the middle of the present century that it again appears as the subject of a poem. Arnold's "Tristram and Iseult" and Swinburne's "Tristram of Lyonesse" in the second half of the present century mark the reappearance of the story in our literature.

The present paper was undertaken as a study of the Tristan saga in English literature, with reference to the conditions under which it has appeared from the earliest times to the present. An effort has been made to bring together as many characteristic references to the story as could be found, in the materials at hand. Since many of the old romances, and much of the early English poetry was inaccessible the present contribution must be a comparatively limited one. The purpose in part has been to ascertain the degree of popularity that the story enjoyed in England, and the condi-

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The result of the study would seem to indicate that the story was never thoroughly naturalized in Early English literature, and never lost the distinctively French characteristics of the original versions; that it did not enjoy the degree of popularity in England that it had in France and Germany, and perhaps even in Spain judging from the number of prose romances; and that the modern English poets in using the story have thought it necessary to modify the original legends considerably in making it the subjects of poems, which have treated the subject according to modern poetical methods.

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Chapter I.

Origin of the Saga.

Any effort to determine the original sources of the Tristan saga involves many of the same difficulties that have been encountered in attempting to trace the origin of the Arthurian legends. Although the story of Tristan and Iseult is not infrequently considered as a part of the Arthurian cycle, owing to the fact that it early became connected with it, there seems to be good reason to believe that it was originally entirely independent of it. In those versions of the saga where Tristan is brought into relation with Arthur and his court, the connection is not a vital one to the story, but occurs in episodes, where it is not difficult to see that the relation is quite incidental and the result of a desire to add another brave knight to Arthur's circle. There were inherent difficulties in bringing these two stories together, however, and Tristan when he appears at the Arthurian court is not one of the Round Table, nor is he bound by the oaths as are the other knights of the court. It has been pointed out that the leading motives of the story are quite different from those that are found in the Arthurian legends; for example the religious element that is so important in the Arthurian story and its congener the Graal saga

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is entirely absent in the Tristan saga. The patriotic and national character which the early versions of the Arthurian story took on in treating of the great King's struggles against the Saxon invaders, does not find a parallel in the Tristan saga for in the latter Tristan is made the hero of the struggle against the Irish tribute.[1] The central motive of the Tristan story - the magic love-potion - is not suggested anywhere in the Arthurian legends, nor is the love between Tristan and Iseult which was produced by it, paralleled by a similar attachment among the knights and ladies of Arthur's court. Such general traits together with the most important fact that even in the earliest extant versions the Tristan story was but loosely connected with the Arthurian cycle, has led to the now quite general belief that the Tristan saga was originally independent of that of Arthur.

On the other hand Prof. Rhys in his studies of the Arthurian legend has pointed out the fact that in the Welsh Triads Drystan or Trystan appears as the famous knight or general of March of whose wife Essyllt he is enamoured, and that on one occasion while taking the place of a swine-herd whom he has despatched with a message to her, he is attacked

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[1] Saintsbury, Flourishing of Romance, p.116.

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[1] Rhys, Studie

[2] Ibid. p.37

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by Arthur who attempts unsuccessfully to carry off the swine. On this point Prof. Rhys writes:- "We are not here concerned with the origin of the story, but in passing we wish to refer to the statement frequently made that Tristam never had anything to do with Arthur originally. That, no doubt, is the impression left on one's mind by the way in which Malory tries to bring Tristram in contact with Arthur; but those who try to sever Tristan and Arthur ought to tell us what to make of the Triad which mentions Tristan watching the swine of March, ab Meirchion, with Arthur trying by fair means or foul to obtain possession of some of their number."[1] If it could be established that the Triads as now extant were in their original form and that later scribes were not influenced by later versions of the stories, they would furnish good evidence that Tristan and Arthur were contemporary Welsh heroes. The story of Tristan and Iseult does not exist in Welsh, however, and Prof. Rhys suggests that it was probably derived from Cornwall or Brittany.[2] The fact that the scenes of Tristan's adventures are in Cornwall, Ireland, and Brittany is of not a little importance in determining the original source of the story, and was doubtless the basis of Prof.

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[1] Rhys, Studies of the Arthurian Legend, p.378.
[2] Ibid. p.37.

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Rhys' theory.

On the question of Tristan's relation to the Arthurian cycle, Prof. Gaston Paris holds to its entire independence, while at the same time maintaining its Celtic origin; he writes, "Tristan, prince de Leonais, etait un heros de la poesie Celtique, originairement tout a fait etranger au cycle d'Arthur et propre a d'autres tribus."[1] This agrees with the results of recent studies regarding the origin of the legends of Tristan and of Arthur and the Round Table, which trace both to Celtic sources.[2] The scene of the Tristan saga as well as the names and general traits of the story seem to indicate plainly Celtic originals. Golther, Singer and others however minimize the Celtic elements and believe that the story is of French origin. Golther while recognizing the Celtic elements as well as the more or less distinct borrowings from the Breton folk legends would agree with P. Paris in his statement that the Tristan saga is to be regarded as "la glorieuse propriete, la creation du genie francaise." He attempts to show that the saga does not go back to a primitive Celtic original, but that the greater part of the adventures which compose the story have not particularly

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[1] Paris, La Litterature au Moyen Age, p.92.
[2] Muret, Romania, Vol.XVII. p.603.

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national characteristics and are to be found in the literature and popular traditions of many of the European nations; so that to the early French "conteurs" is to be given the honor of creating this "incomparable epic of love."[1] While Golther emphasizes the non-Celtic elements, Prof. Sarrazin[2] goes still further and attempts to show that the story is made up of almost entirely of Germanic saga motives. He shows the supposed points of similarity between the Tristan saga and those of purely German origin such as that of Siegfried, the Wolfdietrich saga, the Ornit saga, and the Beowulf story.

Prof. Zimmer, on the other hand, believes that the name is Pictish, and would trace the saga to an historical origin, placing its source in Scotland when the Vikings were in Ireland. This last point would explain the tribute demanded by the Irish king, and the apparently Germanic name Isold, as well as the absence of the legend from Welsh literature. According to Zimmer the story became known to the Breton auxiliaries who went north with the Normans in 1072; and in reproducing the story they changed the scenes and names of places to suit themselves.[3] The fact that the scenes of the

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[1] Golther, Die Saga von Tristan und Isolde. p.35.
[2] Sarrazin, Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Literaturgeschichte. vol.I.p.262.
[3] Zimmer, Zeitschrift für Franz. Sprache und Lit. 1890.

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story are laid in Cornwall, Ireland, and Brittany and that most of the names are Celtic is a difficult point for those who would hold to a non-Celtic origin for the Tristan sagas.

Gaston Paris in summing up the results of some comparative studies on the Tristan saga conducted under his direction a number of years ago treats of the Celtic elements in the legends and writes as follows:- "It would be entirely unreasonable to call into doubt the Celtic origin of these stories. The King Marc with the ears of a horse suffices as a witness to it by his name ("marc" in Celtic signifies horse). Morholt who plays the role of Minotaur, is originally a sea monster, who also has a Celtic name, the first element of which is plainly the word "mor" - "mer" (sea). The scene of the action is alternately in Lyonesse, the country of Tristan, in Cornwall, the country of Marc, in Ireland, the home of the first Iseult, and in Little Brittany, the land of the second Iseult. The sea which we cross from time to time, placed in constant communication the four scenes of action, which we assign to a very early period; for in the twelfth century it seems that travel was not so easy between Brittany in Armorica and in Ireland as was the case when the Bretons had inhabited Armorica and when the Gaelic people of Ireland occupied the western part of Brittany. This domina-

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[1]Paris, Romani

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tion of Ireland over Cornwall at least seems to have left its trace in the episode, otherwise mythological, of Morholt. Many other traits would serve to show the Celtic character of the stories concerning Tristan."[1] In concluding he writes:-"Il faut donc laisser aux Celtes la gloire d'avoir cree, en face de epopees plus heroiques que d'autres races ont produites ou qu'ils ont enfantees eux-memes, l'encomparable epopee de l'amour."[2]

Accepting the Celtic source for the Tristan saga, the question regarding its origin still remains. Unfortunately the remains of Celtic literature, excepting the Welsh, are limited in number and are not of an early enough period to be of any value in furnishing material from which the historical or mythological character of the hero could be argued. From analogy to other saga literature it might be supposed that the characters were originally mythological and that the attempts to connect them with actual persons and events, resulted in applying the story to some historical facts, which give to the adventures a semblance of historical reality. Gaston Paris in a passage already quoted speaks of the pro-

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[1]Paris, Romania, Vol.XV.p.588. [2]Ibid.

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bable mythological origin of the history of Tristan, and mentions the fact that in many points it suggests that of Theseus. Bechstein in the introduction to his edition of Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan touches on this point and speaks of the saga as originally a myth, the mythological elements still surviving in magic remedies of Iseult, the love-potion, the dragon, the fairy dog Petitcrui and the giant Urgan.[1] Leith in his study of the legend of Tristan arrives at the conclusion that it is a nature-myth, and attempts to explain the contests with giants and dragons on a mystical basis.[2] Davies in the "Mythology and Rites of British Druids" regards the Tristan story as an allegory. Prof.F.J. Mone goes still farther than either Leith or Davies in his interpretation of the inner significance of the story; he writes, "Tristan ist eine vollendete darstellung des Gegensatzes oder Dualismus in dreifacher Aüsserung,wie er nämlich im Menschen, in der Erde, und im Planetenhimmel erscheint."[3] Such phantastic speculations interesting though they may be for their ingenuity can scarcely be of value in determining the origin of the legends, and may be left to the consideration of those who would interpret the story of Hamlet as a

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[1]Bechstein Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan, p.VIII.
[2]Leith, The Legend of Tristan. [3]Mone,Introduction to Groate ed.of Gotfried's Tristand,p.VIII.

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As has already been noted the names that appear in the Tristan saga seem for the most part to be of Celtic origin, and in some cases the name from its etymology appears to have been made to fit the character of the person. The name of the hero, Tristan, is generally considered to be Celtic though no satisfactory meaning has been suggested for it. In the older versions of the Triads, as has been already noted, it occurs in the form Drystan and Golther[1] gives Drostan as the cognate Gaëlic form though J. Loth[2] contends that from the standpoint of Celtic philology this is improbable. From the Welsh Drystan to the French Tristan is an easy step especially as according to a popular etymology the name was associated with the adjective "triste"; for the legends relate that Tristan's mother dying at his birth gave to the hero the name Tristan (triste) in memory of the sorrow that she had suffered. Of the origin of the name Iseult which occurs in the several forms Isolt, Isot, Isolde, Ysonde, Yseut, Yseult, there is considerable difference of opinion. G.Paris, Muret, Zimmer, Golther, Sarrazin agree in recognizing it as of Germanic origin; and the first three adopt particularly the same

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[1]Golther, Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Lit. Ges. Vol.III.p. 214.
[2]Loth, Romania,Vol.XIX. p.455.

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theory as to its appearance in the Celtic story, namely, that the name Isolde as that of the Irish princess is to be traced to the period of the domination of the Vikings in Ireland. Golther not holding to the Celtic origin of the saga does not agree with this theory though he thinks that it may be a Germanic form.[1] The form Isolt appears in Germany in the eighth century and is given by Förstemann.[2] The original form would seem to be Iswalda - ice ruler or ice princess - "Eisherrscherin."[3] Loth in the article already quoted would make the name originally of Welsh extraction; and cites passages where it occurs in the form Etthiel, Etthellt as well as Essyllt which would give regularly the French form Iselt, Iseut. The adjective "essylt" in Welsh seems to mean "beautiful", "fair to behold" which would be entirely appropriate for the heroine of the legend.[4] Brangwain or brangaene is evidently the Brangwen of the Mabinogi and means "white breast" (Bran-gwen). Mark is common in the meaning horse and is found in the Celtic. In Morold, G.Paris conceives the first element "mor" to be allied "mer" "mare" - "sea"; Golther takes it as originally a Germanic form - Morwalt. Mor-

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[1]Golther, Die Sage von Tristan und Isolde,p.3. [2]Förstemann Altdeutsches Namenbuch,Vol.I.p.804. [3]Sarrazin,Zeit.für Vér.Lit.Ges.Vol.I.p.266. [4]Loth,Romania,Vol.XIX,p.458.

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[1]Villemarque, I
[2]Golther, Die
[3]Sarrazin, R

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gan is a common Celtic name meaning one who lives by the sea (Mor-gan). Rigobilinus or Rigovellanus Golther gives as the original of the name Riwalin (Rivelin, Rigolin, Riole) which would mean "a Kingly Knight". Kaherdin, Villemarque explain as coming from the Cymrie Kaerden - "beautiful man."[1] The various forms in which most of the names appear in the several versions give opportunity for numerous conjectural etymologies.

The points in which the Tristan saga resembles other stories and legends are treated of at considerable length by Golther[2], and the relations to northern sagas by Sarrazin.[3] From the uncertain ground of the original sources of the story, we can proceed to the consideration of the earliest versions, where the actual material is of a more definite character.

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[1]Villemarque, La Roman de la Table Ronde, p.83.
[2]Golther, Die Sage von Tristan und Isolde, p.11-18.
[3]Sarrazin, Zeit. für Ver. Lit. Ges. Vol. I. p.265.

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Chapter II.

Early French Versions.

Whatever theories may be held concerning the original source of the Tristan saga, there can be no difference of opinion in regarding the medium though which it reached the whole mediaeval world and became one of the popular romances. For although the story of Tristan and Iseult was to be found in almost every country of Europe during the period of the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries, as the extant versions in prose or verse in French, Spanish, Italian, German, old Norse, English, Czech and even Greek indicate, all these versions can be traced to two French originals. The way in which these Celtic legends were transplanted to French soil was entirely natural, when the relations of the Normans and English in the century after the conquest.

The Welsh bard who took the place of the Anglo Saxon scop, recounting the Celtic legends, or chanting the lais to the accompaniment of his rote naturally attracted the attention at the court of the Anglo-Norman kings, and the Anglo-Norman poets were not slow to recount the same romantic legends in their own tongue. The lais of Marie of France, probably written in England, are perhaps the best examples of this

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type of Anglo-Norman poem. In one of these the lai of Chevrefeuille an incident of the Tristan story is treated though this was doubtless written after the longer poems.

The first union into a single consecutive narative of the lais relating to these adventures, as far as we know, was made by a certain Berol (or Beroul, or Berox), an Anglo-Norman poet, who seems to have written this work in England about 1150. This version of Berol has survived only in fragments but it was the basis in part if not solely of the first German poem on the subject by Eilhart von Oberge composed about 1175. The poem attributed to Berol was followed shortly after by one by Chretien de Troyes supposed to have been written about 1160, but which unhappily has been lost. About the same time there appears to have been another version by one La Chevre which has not survived. Another Anglo-Norman poet Thomas brought together the legends of Tristan and united them in a poem which differs in many details from the version of Berol and Eilhart. The work of Thomas is also extant only in fragments; but German, English and Norwegian adaptations make it possible to fill out the original to comparative completion.

All the existing versions of the saga may be divided into two groups according as they follow the original of Berol

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or that of Thomas. In some of the later works on the subject parts of both versions are united, this is particularly true of the continuations of Gottfried von Strassburg's uncompleted poem by Heinrich von Freiberg and Ulrich von Turheim. To the Berol group belong;

1st. The French Poem attributed to Berol.

2nd. The little French poem in the manuscript of Berne, known as "Tristan disguised as fool."

3rd. The Middle High German poem of Eilhart von Oberge.

To the Thomas group belong the following versions:-

1st. The French poem attributed to Thomas.

2nd. The little French poem corresponding to the second of the Thomas group and also designated as "Tristan disguised as fool."

3rd. The Norse translation in prose "Tristrams Saga ok Isondar" by Brother Robert.

4th. The Middle High German poem "Tristan and Isolde" by Gottfried von Strassburg.

5th. The Old English poem "Sir Tristrem" by Thomas of Erceldoune.

The so-called Berol fragment contains some four thousand (4444) lines in which the name of Berol is repeated twice. The fragment has been printed by Francisque Michel in his

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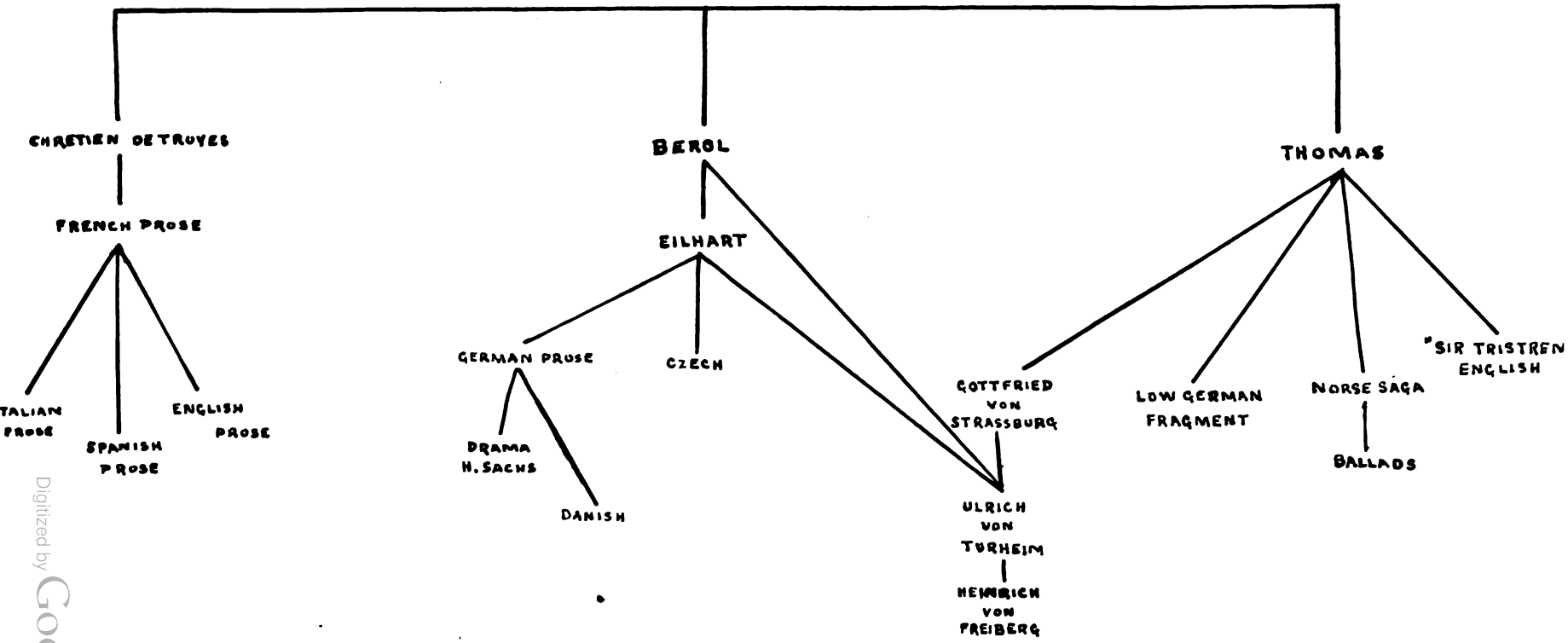

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[2] Muret, Romani

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"Tristan, recueil de ce qui reste des poemes relatifs a ses aventures." (Vol.I. p.3-212), a most valuable collection of the extant fragments of Tristan legends in French, and including all the poems of the subject, except a small fragment discovered by de la Villemarque at Cambridge and published in the Archives des Missions Scientifiques. (Vol.V. p.97). The text of the Berol version is in a corrupt state, and possibly was not the work of a single author at all. Heinzel believes that a dozen or more poems each treating of a separate episode can be traced in the fragment and that it is nothing more than compilations.[1] Muret who has made an extended comparison between Berol and Eilhart believes that a division is to be made at line 2976, since the second part, which is evidently a continuation, does not agree in very many details with either Eilhart or the other versions of the saga.[2] Such questions are interesting particularly for the possible light that might be cast on the origin of the poem, but for the present purpose it is sufficient to consider the poem as it stands, whether it is the work of one or more authors.

The points in which the Berol version differs from that

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[1]Heinzel, Zeit. für Deut. Alterth. vol.XIV. p.290 - 343.
[2]Muret, Romania, Vol. XVI. p.291.

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of Thomas are numerous, but in no case is difference in any of the vital parts of the story. The history of Tristan's parents for example differs considerably in the Berol version and that of Thomas; this account is not preserved in the French fragment, but a comparison may be made with Eilhart's Tristan(lines 71-102). So also in the account of his youth there are minor differences(cf.Eilhart, 103-350). One of the poetical incidents of the Berol version which is not found in the Thomas version is the story of the swallows and the golden hair as related by Eilhart(1370-1418). In the first journey to Ireland, according to Berol, Tristan does not see Iseult nor does he see the queen who cures his word. On the second journey in search of the owner of the golden hair which the swallows let fall in King Mark's hall, Tristan and his companions are accidentally cast up on the coast of Ireland, and afterwards find Iseult (Eilhart 1419-1597). Another important incident related by Berol (747-1266) and Eilhart (3966-4367) is that of the escape of Tristan from the chapel and his daring leap into the sea. According to Berol King Arthur and his knights are present as witnesses to Iseult's ordeal with the hot iron. This is important as indicating how early the two characters were brought together. In Eilhart (4995-5487) Tristan, after the king and

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Iseult are reconciled, goes to Brittany with King Arthur, and mingles with the knights of the Round Table. In the poem of Berol, Tristan remains near the court of Mark and has frequent interviews with the queen; and on one occasion is discovered by some of his enemies and kills two of them (the poem breaks off abruptly at this point.)

The account of the last days of the hero, of his sending for Iseult, and the story of the black and white sails is practically the same in Eilhart as in the Thomas versions, except that Iseult of the white hinds is not moved by jealousy but

(line 9380) "Âne aller slachte valscheit
Sprach sie sô, tumlîchen,
Und sagete im lugelîchen
Der segil wêre wîz nît."

These examples, as well as others that might be given, indicate the character of the differences between the two versions, and some the characteristics of the Berol version.

The poem of Thomas is also preserved in a fragmentary state; there are four of these fragments extant, as follows: (1) Douce manuscript, (2) Sneyd manuscript, (3) Strassburg Manuscript, (4) Fragment discovered by de la Villemarque at Cambridge. The first three were published by Michel, and the four in the Archives des Miss. Scientifiques (vol. V. p. 97).

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These are usually taken to be parts of the same poem though Heinzel held that Thomas did not treat the whole subject but only part of it. Kölbling, Vetter and Röttiger take the view that the fragments are all parts of a complete work to be credited to Thomas. The arrangement of these poems in their proper order and a comparison with the German, English and Norwegian versions shows that the latter are translations of the poem of Thomas, and with the aid of these three works, the missing parts can be outlined. Gottfried in his poem cites Thomas of Brittany as the author of the work from which he took his romance, a further indication of the source of the German version and proof of the existence of a French work attributed to Thomas.

No analysis of Thomas' work is given in this place since a consideration of the old English poem "Sir Tristrem" involves a discussion of all of the important parts of the story.

One interesting point regarding the original source of this poem is to be found in the lines of this poem in which Thomas refers to one Breri as his authority. The lines are as follows: -

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".....Breri
Ky solt les gestes et les cuntes
Des tuz les reis, des tuz les cuntes
Ki orent ests en Bretaigne."

Gaston Paris connects this Breri with a Welsh chronicler Bledhericus mentioned by Girant di Barri in his Descriptio Kambriae in the following words: -

"famosus ille fabulator Bledhericus qui tempora nostra paulo praevenient."[1]

Girant died about 1150 A.D. which would place Bledhericus in the proper chronological relation to Thomas. The name Bledhericus, G. Paris shows would regularly become Bleri or Breri in French, and he also points out that he was evidently one of the Welsh bards, and probably was the one through whom Thomas first heard of the exploits of Tristan. If such a relation could be established it would be the strongest argument for a Welsh original and hence of the Celtic origin of the Tristan saga.

Another question of interest regarding the identity of Thomas, has been raised in connection with the authorship of the Anglo-Norman romance of King Horn, the author of which is

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[1]Paris, Romania VIII,p.425.

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also one Thomas. Efforts have been made to identify the Thomas of the Tristan fragments with the Thomas of the romance of Horn and Remnyld, but with negative rather than positive results.[1] As the original of "Sir Tristrem", Gottfried's Tristan and the Norse saga the Thomas version plays the most important part in the history of the Tristan saga. Of the literary qualities of the poems of Berol and Thomas the following notice from Prof.W.P.Ker's "Epic and Romance" may be quoted: -[2]

"The most remarkable examples of the earliest French romantic methods are presented by the fragments remaining of the Anglo-Norman poems on Tristram and Iseult by Beroul and Thomas, especially the latter; most remarkable because in this case there is the greatest contradiction between the tragic capabilities story and the very simple methods of the Norman poets....the poetical genius of Thomas is shown in his abstinence from effort. Hardly anything could be simpler; he does nothing to vitiate his style; there is little ornament or emphasis. The story itself is there, as if the poet thought it an impertinence to add any harmonies of his own.

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[1]Söderhielm ,Les Auteurs de Tristran et de Horn Romania,vol. XV.p.575.Also Anglia,IV.p.346. [2]Ker,Epic and Romance p.393.

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If it were only extant as a whole, it would be one of the most notable of poems. Where else is anything like it, for sincerity and for thinness? The poet of Tristram does not represent the prevalent fashion of the time. The eloquence and the passion of the amorous romances are commonly more effusive and seldom as true. The lost Tristram of Chrestien would probably have made a contrast with the Anglo-Norman poems in this respect. Chrestien of Troyes is at the head of the French Romantic School, and his interest is in the scenes of love; not in ancient, rude and passionate stories, such as the story of Tristram - for it is rude and ancient, even in the French of Thomas - not in "Celtic magic" except for decorative and incidental purposes, but in psychology and analysis of emotions and in the appropriate forms of language for such things."

Unfortunately the poem of Chretien of Troyes has never been discovered and is doubtless lost to the world. It is the general opinion of those who have studied the French prose romances that Chretien's poem was the original of these.

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Chapter III.

The English "Sir Tristrem."

Since it was no doubt on British soil that the Tristan saga had its origin, and at the English court that the lais of the hero's adventures were sung, and by Anglo-Norman poets that this great mediaeval romance was given to the world; it seems remarkable that there should be but a single version of the story in early English literature and that, not earlier than the middle of the thirteenth century. When however, it is remembered that for two centuries after the conquest French was the literary language of England, and that it was not until the time of Edward I and his successors that the work of translating and making over French and Anglo-Norman romances began to be common, it is not unnatural that the Tristan story should remain untold in the English tongue. When the time came for the "Full cornucopia of romantic poesy" to be "shaken out over the English people"[1] this "incomparable epic of love" found a poet as did the other mediaeval romances. It is unfortunate that the work of translating this story into English did not fall to a poet of great genius, and that our literature could not have been

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[1]Ten Brink, Hist.of Eng.Lit.vol.I,p.234.

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enriched by the work of a great master like Gottfried von Strassburg. But a nation whose literary traditions had been almost completely lost by three centuries of inactivity could scarcely be expected to produce a work comparable to that which grew up in the springtime of the German minnesingers. The first great need was a proper metrical form into which to cast the rich poetical material that the French original offered. Traditions of the old alliterative verse still survived among the people at large, but while this was well suit ed to the rugged character of the Anglo-Saxon poetry, the more delicate fancy of the Celtic and French poetry could not be recast into such a form. Not only the poetical form, but the language was in a state of transition from the period when to speak the mother tongue was a disgrace, to the time a century later when the father of English poetry should establish its literary form. With the advantage of another century's tentative efforts in the field of literature, Chaucer accomplished for English poetry in the matter of form and expression what was impossible to the poet of "Sir Tristrem." In this connection it is not uninteresting to notice that the English version of the Tristan saga as appears from the dialect and the reference to the home of the author came from the country north of the Humber, and not far from the Scot-

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[1]Nisbet, Syst
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[3]Winton, Cro
[5]Mair

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tish border. The influence of the French language and literature could scarcely have been so strong in the north, and though the poet evidently worked from the French original, the French element in his work, while considerable, seems to be smaller than in Chaucer.

The reputed author of "Sir Tristrem" was one Thomas of Ercildoune, otherwise known as Thomas the Rymer. Aside from occasional mention of his name and references to him, particularly in connection with certain prophetic utterances which were attributed to him, his career is buried in obscurity. According to Nisbet's Heraldry in one charter he is called Thomas Rymor, but in other documents of an earlier date, Thomas Learmont of Ercildoun[1]. No writer who preceded Boyce[2] adds the surname Learmont; when mentioned by Robert of Brunne, Barbour, Winton,[3] Bower[4] and Mair[5], it is as Thomas of Ercildoun,,while Henry the blind poet calls him Thomas the Rhymer[6]. According to a charter granted to Trinity House of Soltra his son describes himself as Thomas of Ercidoun, son and heir of Thomas Rymour; the following is the reference as it appears in the chartulary of the Trinity House of Soltra, Advocates' Library:

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[1]Nisbet, System of Heraldry vol.I.p.134.quoted in For.Rev. vol.IV.p.141. [2]Boethii,Scotorum Historia Paris 1527. [3]Winton,Cronykil of Scotland. [4]Bower,Scotichronicon cir.1430 [5]Mair,Major de Gestis Scotorum Paris 1521. [6]Foreign Rev. vol.IV.p.143.

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"Omnibus has literas visuris vel audituris Thomas de Ercildoun filius et heres Thomae Rymour de Ercildoun salutem in Domino." etc, dated, "Anno Domino Millessimo CC Nonagesimo Nono."[1] Ercildoun is connected with the modern Earlston a village in county Berwick at a short distance from Melrose. Chambers mentions a ruined tower at the western extremity of the town which is supposed to have been the residence of Thomas, now known as Rymer's Tower.[2] Brandl[3] as a result of his investigations, has found other evidence of Thomas' existence during the period from 1250-80, which with the above charter executed in 1299 and apparently after his death, fixes the period of his activity to the second half of the thirteenth century and his death sometime during the last years of the century. The prophecies for which Thomas was also well known have been edited and published by Murray together with such biographical material as could be obtained.[4] His authorship of "Sir Tristrem" was assumed by Sir Walter Scot when he published the work for the first time in 1804, from the opening lines of the romance which are as follows: -

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[1]Scott, Minstrelsy of Scottish Border, vol.I.p.169.
[2]Chamber, Picture of Scotland, vol.I.p.67. Quoted in For. Rev.IV.p.141. [3]Brandl, Thomas of Ercildoune, Berlin 1880. (Quoted by Kölbing.) [4]Murray, The Romance and Prophecies of Thomas of Ercildoun. London 1875.

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I was at Erceldoun,
Wiþ Tomas spak y þare;
Þer herd y rede in roune,
Who Tristrem gat and bare;
Who was king wiþ croun,
And who him fosterd ȝare,
And who was bold baroun,
As þair elders ware.
Bi ȝere
Tomas telles in toun
His auentours, as þai ware.[1]

Unless Thomas did not desire to appear as the author of "Sir Tristrem", these opening lines would seem to indicate that the work was written by some unknown writer, who claims to have received his inspiration from Thomas. Before entering upon the question of the authorship of the poem, a passage from Robert Mannyng of Brunne's prologue to the chronicle may be quoted:-

Als þai haf writen and sayd,
Haf I alle in myn Inglis layd,
In symple speche, as I couthe,
Þat in lightest iu,mannes mouthe.

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1. Kölbing, Tristan Sage,vol.II.p.3.

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I mad noght for no disours,
Ne for no seggers ne harpours,
Bot for þe luf of symple men,
Þat strange Inglis can not ken.
For mant it ere, þat strange Inglis
In ryme wat neuer what it is.
And bot þai wist what it mente,
Ellis me thoght, it were all schente.
I made it not forto be praysed
Bot at þe lewed men were aysed
If it were made in ryme couwee
Or in strangere or enterlace -
Þat rede Inglis, it ere inowe,
Þat couthe not haf coppled a knowe -
Þat outhere in couwee or inbaston
Som suld haf ben fordon.
So that fele men, þat it herde,
Suld not witte howe þat it ferde.
I see in song, in sedgeyng tale
Of Erceldoun and of
Now þam says as þai þam wroght,
And in þer sayng it semed noght;
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[1]Sir Walter
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Ouer gestes it has pe steem,
Ouer all þat is or was,
If men it sayd, as made Thomas.
But I here it no man so say,
Þat of som copple som is away.
So þare fayre sayng her beforne
Is þare trauayle nere forlorne;
Þai sayd it for pride and nobleye,
Þat non were suylk as þei;
And alle þat þai wild ouerwhere,
Alle þat ilx wille now farfare
Þai sayd in so quante Inglis
Þat may one wat not what it is.

This passage from Robert of Brunne probably written about 1330 seems to connect Thomas of Ercildoun's name with a version of Sir Tristrem and Sir Walter Scott accordingly argued that Thomas' was probably the earliest version of the Tristan saga.[1] What the reference plainly indicates is that Sir Tristrem existed at the time Robert wrote, that it was highly regarded ("Over gestes it has the steem / Over all that is or was"), that Thomas was credited with the authorship of it,

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[1]Sir Walter Scott, Sir Tristrem p.63 ff. Quoted by Kölbing XXVIII.

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[1]Kolbing, Tri
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and that in Robert's time the language was such "quaint English" that it was difficult to understand. Kölbing does not accept the view that Thomas was the author of "Sir Tristrem" but believes that it was the work of an unknown writer who with the French version of Thomas of Brittany as his original, thought to give greater weight and authority to his poem by attributing it to Thomas of Ercildoun well known by his prophecies. Kölbing believes that the reference in Robert of Brunne is to be explained by the fact that Robert knew the "Sir Tristrem" as we have it, and assumed the authorship as Scott did from the opening lines.[1]

Murray in his edition of Thomas' works goes still farther than Kölbing in placing little importance on the passage in Robert's work; he writes "It is not certain whether the Thomas here is Thomas of Ercildoun or Thomas of Kendale, nor that the first four lines (93-96) refer to the same subject as those that follow: Sir Tristrem may, for anything that appears, be a third example in addition to the works of Erceldoun and Kendale of the liability of "quante Inglis" to be marred by reciters."[2] It seems very evident however that

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[1]Kolbing, Tristan Sage, vol. II. p. XXX. [2]Murray, The Romance and Prophecies of Thomas of Erceldoun, p. XX. Quoted by Kölbing, vol. II. p. XXIX.

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Robert of Brunne refers to Thomas of Ercildoun as the author of Sir Tristrem and since he wrote only a generation after Thomas' death there is no reason to believe that he did not know of Thomas' authorship of Sir Tristrem from other sources besides the first lines of the poem. Whether we accept the theory that Thomas was the actual author or that it was written by some unknown author, the fact remains that it was written during the last decade of the thirteenth century or the first few years of the fourteenth century; that it was in quaint English in Robert's day (Cir.1330); and that Thomas of Ercildoun (Cir.1250-99) is given as the source of the poem in the work itself.

The romance of "Sir Tristrem" as we now have it is in the Auchinleck manuscript which it is generally assumed dates from the first part of the fourteenth century, a further substantiation of the evidence as to the original date of composition.[1] The poem occupies folios 281-299 of the manuscript and was discovered by Joseph Ritson in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh, to which the whole manuscript was presented in 1744 by Alexander Boswell, by courtesy Lord Auchinleck, a judge of the court of session. The manuscript is described as a thick quarto on vellum and contains upwards

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[1]Kölbing, Tristan Sage, vol.II.p.XXXI.

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[1]Schipper, Alten
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of forty poems. After folio 299 one or more leaves are missing and hence the poem is incomplete; the illuminations have also been cut out in several places and thus the last word of the opening line is lost as are also lines 124-135. As has already been noted the romance was first published by Sir Walter Scott in 1804; a second edition appeared in 1806; a third in 1811 and the fourth in 1819. In these editions the conclusion was supplied by Scott, the metrical form and language in imitation of the original.

The poem is written in stanzas of eleven lines, the movement is iambic with three beats to the line except the ninth which consists of a single foot. The general rhyme scheme is - a b a b a b a b c b c; the variant a b a b ab. ab cac is found in five stanzas. The stanza form and the more common rhyme scheme is the same as that of some of the songs of Laurence Minot.[1] The character and movement of the verse gives to the narrative something of the character of the ballad, as Ten Brink points out, and it is evident from a verse form of this kind how the ballads grew out of the metrical romances,[2] though in this particular case, if any

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[1]Schipper, Altenglische Metrix, p.386.
[2]Ten Brink, Hist. of Eng. Lit. vol. I, p.237.

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ballads did exist they have not survived to the present day in any of the ballad collection.

In regard to the relation of this romance to other versions of the Tristan saga it has already been noted that Sir Tristrem belongs to the Thomas group. A comparison with the French original as far as it is extant, and with the Norse Translation which is supposed to be nearly a literal translation shows that the greatest originality of the author of the English version was exercised in abridging the original. He does not always accomplish this difficult task with the greatest skill so that the books would occasionally cause some ambiguity if the story were not already familiar to the reader. In many minor details the author departs considerably from the original, and accordingly it has been conjectured that he worked from memory and supplied such parts as suited his purpose, and omitting details that he had forgotten. It scarcely seems possible that he could have had a French original before him when he wrote unless the latter was in a very much modified form from that which served as a model for the Norse Saga and Gottfried's Tristan. At the same time the principal points of the story as well as many of the minor details agree fully with these other two versions of the Thomas group. A detailed comparison of these

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three versions - the Norse Saga, Gottfried's Tristan with the English "Sir Tirstrem" has been made by both Heinzel[1] and Kölbing[2] and is of considerable interest showing the degree and amount of divergence between them. The light that such a comparison throws on the peculiarities of the English version on the character of the part of Sir Tristrem is of not a little importance, for it is indeed the only means that is at hand for determining the merits of the work. Two facts are evident, first the author attempts to condense the story either purposely, or because his memory does not supply the mass of details with which Gottfried adds to his version; and second that the metrical form which the author of Sir Tristrem has chosen imposes limitations which are not always successfully overcome. The first fact gives rise to considerable ambiguity as to the connection of the various episodes, as the author does not seem to take into consideration the fact that he is writing for many who probably were not familiar with the original story. If his readers were able to read between the lines at times as the present day day reader of "Sir Tristrem" can do, it presented no particular difficulty. The limitations which the interesting but

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[1] Heinzel, Zeit. für Deut. Alterth. vol. XIV, p. 272-447.
[2] Kölbing, Tristan Sage, vol. I, p. XVII - VXLVIII.

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difficult metrical form imposed was also a source of ambiguity which even the student today finds difficulty in clearing away, and it is probable that the reader of Thomas of Ercildoun's own time while more familiar with the peculiarities of idiom and expression, was still at a loss to find a meaning for some of the lines. These facts may furnish a reason why the story has come down to us in but a single manuscript, while of some of the mediaeval romances many exist.

The consideration of some of the characteristic points in the romance will furnish a better opportunity to decide as to the peculiarities of the English version, than any effort to treat of the general qualities of the work.. The poet introduces his subject as has already been noted by a stanza in which he refers to the source of his story. In the second stanza, also a part of the introduction, is sounded the note of regret for the good old days of romantic adventure, and while this is not foreign to the French poems of the period, there seems to be a touch of the so-called Anglo-Saxon melancholy, that is not of the conventional type of the longing for the past to be found in early French poetry. The lines are as follows: -

Þis semly somers day,

In winter it is nouȝt sen;

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Þis greues wexen al gray,
Þat in her time were grene;
So dos þis world, y say,
Ywis and nouȝt at wene:
Pe gode ben al oway,
Pat our elders haue bene,
To abide.

The following verses (III-XIII) take up the story of Tristrem's parents and of the sorrowful circumstances under which he came into the world. Of Tristrem's name the poet says: -

In court men cleped him so:
Po "tram" bi for pe "trist".

but beyond this nothing is said of the appropriateness of the first element "trist" to the sorrowful circumstances of his birth, as do the other versions. In Gottfried are the following lines in explanation of how the name was given to the hero at the time of his baptism: -

(line 1994) "Wie sî diz kint mit triure enpfie,
mit welher triure sî'z gewan,
sô nennen wir in Trístán.
nu heizet triste triure:
and von der âventiure
sô wart daz kint Tristan genant."

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Though the English author writes that "tram" was the second element of the name he invariably writes Tristrem; and when in Ireland the hero disguises his name by transposing it, the author makes it appear as Tramtris. It is possible that the form Tristrem is to be attributed to the copyist, but since the word does not occur in a rhyme the original form cannot be determined. In treating of Tristrem's youth the poem does not differ to any extent from the other versions. One point, however, is of some interest which does not appear elsewhere, is the description of a game of chess with the Norwegian merchants who afterwards carry him off on their ship: -

A cheker he fond bi a cheire,
He asked, who wold play.
Pe mariner spac bonair:
"Child, what wiltow lay?"
"Oȝain an hauke of noble air
Tventi schillinges, to say:
Wheper so mates oþer fair,
Bere hem boþe oway."
Wip wille
Þe mariner swore his faye:
"For soþe, ich held þer tille!"

XXX

Now boþe her wedde lys

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And play þai beginne;
Ysett he hap be long asise[1]
And endred beþ per inne.
Þe play beginneþ to arise,
Tristrem deleþ atvinne;
Her dede als so þe wise:
He ȝaf has he gan winne
In raf;
Of playe ar he wald blinne,
Sex haukes he ȝat and ȝaf.

In connection with this reference to Tristrem's skill as a chess player is another (line 1227) where in describing his first journey to Ireland the story relates that he took chess men with him: -

"His harp, his croude was rike
His tables, his chess he bare."

While still a youth and during his wanderings on his return from the captivity among the Norwegians his skill in the art of hunting is described at considerable length.in the English version; this is of interest as in later times "Tristrem"or "old Tristrem" became the proverbial authority who was quoted

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[1]Archelogia XXIV,p.286 gives an account of this kind of game called the "long asise."

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frequently in connection with the art of venery. His skill as a harper is often alluded to in all the Tristan legends and it is with his harp that he first wins the confidence of Iseult.

Passing over the incidents relative to his first appearance at court, the discovery of his identity, his fight with Moraunt (Morhold) we come to his first journey to Ireland whither he was carried by chance according to the English version and not purposely seeking the magic remedies of Ysonde as in the other versions; this divergence is not important but it indicates that the motives are not so carefully arranged as in the Gottfried version where the hero is told of the magic arts of the Irish Princess by Moraunt her brother just before Tristan slays him. It is to Ireland that he journeys in search of a remedy for the wound, and not as in "Sir Tristrem" that he goes to sea aimlessly in his feeble condition and is accidentally cast on the shore of Ireland; in this point however "Sir Tristrem" agrees with the story as it appears in Eilhart generally agreed to represent the earlier version of the story.[1] In treating of Tristrem's woo-

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[1]Kölbing, Tristan Sage, vol. I. p. LV.

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ing of Ysonde for King Mark, the English version had Mark appear desirous of seeing Ysonde as a result of Tristrem's description of her beauty; and Tristrem goes to woo her because the barons were jealous of Tristrem and desired Mark to marry in order that the hero might not inherit the kingdom. The poetical story of the two swallows striving for possession of a golden hair and thereby attracting the attention of the king, who is so impressed by the beauty of the single hair that he desires to find the person to whom it belongs, it will be remembered was rejected by Gottfried as spurious. The English version does not mention it though a line (1366)

"a swalu ich herd sing,"

which does not fit in very well with the context, suggests that the poet remembered something of a swallow but evidently had forgotten the part that it played in the story, and mentions it in this connection in an entirely meaningless way. Swinburne, we shall have occasion to see, uses the more poetical episode of the swallows in his treatment of the story.

A study of the motive of the love portion as it appears in the several versions furnishes some of the most interesting facts regarding the attitude of the mediaeval mind in its belief in the potency of charms. That the belief in such magic charms was an implicit one is evidenced by the complete

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acceptance of the story without any questioning of the power of the love-potion which the Queen prepared. Gottfried wrote:-

(line 11436) .....sô betihte

Îsôt diu wîse künigîn
in ein glasevâzzelin
einen tranc von minnen
mit alsô kleinen sinnen
ûf geleit und vor bedâht,
mit solher krefte vollebrâht,
mit sweme sîn ieman getranc,
den muose er âne sînen danc
vor allen dingen meinen,
und er dâ wider in einen:
in was ein tôt unde ein leben,
ein triure, ein frôude samet gegeben.

In the Norse saga Robert describes how the potion was prepared as well as of its power: -

"En dróttning gørði einn leyniligan drykk inniliga af margskonar blómstrum, grǫsum ok listugum vélum, ok gørði svá ástfenginn, at enginn lifandi maðr, sá er af drakk, má við haldast at unna þerrri konu, sem af drakk með hánum, ámeðan hann lifði."[1]

[1] Kölbing, Tristan Saga, vol. I. p. 56.

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The English story says briefly that: -

Line 1644 "Her moder about was bliþe
And took a drink of miȝt
þat loue wald kiþe."

In Eilhart the power of the potion extends over a period of four years during which the lovers cannot be separated for a single day without dying and they remain true to each other throughout life as well (lines 2280-2300)[1]. In treating of the fateful occasion when Tristan and Iseult partake of the love-potion all the versions lead up to the scene with different motives. In Gottfried (lines 11652-11670) the whole party lands in order that the ladies may recover from the effects of the sea voyage; and Tristan, in the course of conversation with Isot, asks a servant to bring wine to them. The servant, one of Isot's waiting maids brings the magic potion by mistake and both drink of the supposed wine.

In the Norse version Chapter XLVI it is related that in the course of the voyage the weather became oppressingly warm, and Tristram becoming thirsty orders wine to be brought; a servant of Tristram, in this story, brings the flask with the potion and Tristan drinks a portion of it and offers the rest

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[1]Lichtenstein Eilhart von Oberge, p. 117.

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to Isond. The English version leads up to this scene even more naturally than do either of the others. by representing Tristrem as rowing about against an unfavorable wind, and Isonde as offering him the wine with which to refresh himself after his exertions.

CLI

Ysonde brizt of hewe
Is fer out in þe se.
A winde ozain hem blewe,
Þat sail no mizt þer be.
So rewe þe knizites trewe,
Tristrem, so rewe he,
Euer as þai com newe,
He on azain hem þre,
Gret swink.
Swete Ysonde, þe fre,
Asked Bringwain a drink.

CLII

Þe coupe was richeli wrouzt,
Of gold it was, the pin;
In al þe warld nas nouzt
Swiche drink, as þer was in.
Brengwain was wrong biþouzt,

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To þat drink sche gan win
And swete Ysonde it bitauȝt;
Sche bad Tristrem bigin,
To say.
Her loue miȝt no man tvin
Til her endingday."[1]

Swinburne in "Tristram of Lyonesse" leads up to this scene by an admirable passage which like this "Sir Tristrem" is descriptive of the hero directing the ships' course against wind and wave. A comparison of the treatment of the other motives in the three versions does not show any marked variations in the English version. In the account of the council which King Mark calls to consider the evidences of Ysonde's guilt there are touches of local color in the mention of Westminster (line 2235) as the place where the ordeal was to take place. And again where the writer mentions the Thames (line 2245) when Tristrem disguised as a pilgrim carries Ysonde to the ship and falls with her in order that the oath which is taken before the ordeal may be a true one. It ought also to be noticed that in the English version Tristrem has no connection with King Arthur and the latter is not mentioned anywhere in the work. In Gottfried and the

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[1]Kölbing, Tristan Sage, vol. II. p. 46.

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Norse version he is mentioned casually in one or two connections but only as any other famous historical character might be and without any reference to his relation to Tristram. Unfortunately the last lines of the manuscript are missing, so that the conclusion of the story does not appear. Since the poetic story of the white and black sails is preserved in the French fragments and in the Norse saga it must have appeared in the English version. "Sir Tristrem" ends with an account of a battle which the hero fought to avenge the wrongs of a young knight who also was called Tristram: -

"A knizt that werd no schon
Hete Tristrem sope to say."

The young knight was killed and Tristram receives the wound that was afterwards to cause his death: -

"Ac an aruwe oway he bare
In his eld wounde."

When Sir Walter Scott published Sir Tristrem in 1804 he completed the poem by giving the incidents of Tristrem's and Ysonde's death. These fifteen stanzas are an evidence of Scott's interest and love for the old romance rather than of his exact knowledge of the philological and metrical points involved; he was a pioneer in this field however, and did not have the advantage of the results which nearly a century's study of middle English has produced.

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Chapter IV.

References to the Saga from the 14th. to the 16th. Century.

If the popularity of the Tristan saga in England is to be measured by the number of English versions that existed of it, there is no way of determining whether it was popularly known, since "Sir Tristrem" is the only work extant that treats the story as a whole or in part. If Robert of Brunne's statement that this particular version was esteemed over all other "gestes" that existed or had existed it is strange that it did not leave traces of its influence in literature. While the legends of Tristan found wide circulation among all the nations of the continent and are even to be found among the Greeks and Slavs, the story does not seem to have taken root in England. There is not an English prose version although a large number are found in French, Spanish, Italian and German. The occasional references that appear in English poetry of the fourteenth century can be traced directly to French influence.

One of the earliest references to Tristan and Iseult that appears in English is in the romance of "Horn Childe" which also appears in the Auchinleck Manuscript, and which was also translated from the French. In the following lines in stanza XXVI of "Horn Childe" the love of Horn and Rimneld

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is compared to that of the love of Tristan and Iseult: -

"Loved neuer childer more
Bot Tristrem or Ysoud it ware
Who so rede arizt." [1]

The romance of "King Horn" has several points of similarity to the Tristan saga, such for example as the journey of Horn to Ireland where he unwillingly wins the love of the princess of Reynild, which in many of its details suggests Tristan in Brittany and Iseult of the White Hands. The fact that one Thomas appears as the author of King Horn has led to a conjecture that he might be the same person as Thomas of Brittany the author of the Tristan fragments; which would explain the similarities.[2]

In Chaucer, Lydgate, and Gower, Tristan and Iseult are always mentioned among the other famous lovers in literature. Such references to them as examples of faithful lovers are very frequent in French literature throughout the middle ages.[3] Chaucer in his "Ballad to Rosamonde" assures his lady love that in the depth of his love he is a second Tristan.

(line 17-20) "Nas never pyk walwed in galauntyne

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[1]Wissman, Anglia IV, p.346. [2]Romania XV, p.575.
[3]Romania XV, p.534. Les Allusions a la Leg. de Trist. dans la Lit. du Moyen Age.

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As I in love am walwed and y-wounde;
For which ful ofte I of my-self divyne
That I am trewe Tristam the secounde."[1]

In the "Hous of Fame" Isaude appears in the character of the lover in the following lines: - (1793-1797)

"..These ben they that wolde honour
Have, and do noskinnes labour,
Ne do no good, and yit han laude;
And that men wende that bele Isaude
Ne coude hem noght of love werne;"[2]

The catalogues of lovers in the "Parliament of Fowles" ? and the "Legend of Goode Women" would not have been complete without mention of this famous pair, and accordingly Chaucer introduces them in both. In the Parliament of Fowles the temple of Venus is described as

(line 284) " . . . . . and peynted over all
Of many a story, of which I touche shal
A fewe, as of Calixte and Athalaunte,
And many a mayde, of which the name I wante;
Semyramus,,Candace, and Ercules,
Biblis, Dido, Tisbe and Piramus,

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[1]Skeat,Chaucer's Complete Works (Students' ed.) p.121.
[2]Ibid,p.344.

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Tristram, Isoude, Paris, and Achilles,
Eleyne, Cleopatra, and Troilus,
Silla, and eek the moder of Romulus -
Alle these were peynted on that other syde,
And al hir love, and in what plyte they dyde."[1]

The Prologue to the Legend of Goode Women contains a reference to the beauty of Isoude and here her name is coupled with that of Helen of Troy indicating that as Tristan came to be the ideal type of the knight, so Iseult was the embodiment of female beauty and attractiveness. The moral aspect of the attachment of these two lovers evidently did not enter into the mediaeval cnsideration of their character for the magic potion was responsible to their love. The lines from the Legend are as follows: -

(line 249) Hyd, Absolon, thy gilte tresses clere;
Ester, ley thou thy meknesse al a-doun;
Hyd, Jonathas, al thy frendly manere;
Penalopee, and Marcia Catoun,
Mak of your wyfhod no comparisoun;
Hyde ye your beautes, Isoude and Eleyne,
My lady cometh, that al this may disteyne.[2]

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[1]Skeat, Chaucer's Complete Works, p. 105. [2]Ibid p. 356.

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Lydgate refers to Tristan and Iseult among other lovers by way of moralizing on the folly of such passion in a stanza of the "Complaint of the Black Knight": -[1]

"What shall I say of yonge Piramus?
Of trew Tristram, for al his hye renoun?
Of Achilles, or of Antonius?
Of Arcite, or of him Palemoun
What was the ende of his passion
But, after sorrows, deeth and than hir grave?
Lo, here the guerdon tha these lovers have?"

Again in the "Temple of Glas"[2] Isaude is mentioned in the description of the temple which is a very evident imitation of Chaucer's "Hous of Fame":-

(line 77) "There was eke Isaude-meni a noper mo-
And al pe turment and al pe cruel wo,
That she hade for Tristram al hir liue."

Following Chaucer and Lydgate comes Gower who is inclined to use the story of the tragic love as an example to point a moral for all lovers. In the Confessio Amantis[3] he makes them serve as a warning against intemperance:-

"And for to loke in evidence

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[1]Skeat, Chaucerian Pieces, p.256. [2]Old English Texts No. 60. (extra series) [3]Pauli ed. Confessio Amantis, vol. III. p.17.

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Upon soth experience,
So as it hath befall er this,
In every mannes mouth it is
How Tristram was of love drunke
With Bele Isolde, wan they drunke
The drink, which Brangwaine hem betok
Er that King Mark, his eme, her toke
To wife, as it was after knowe."

Using this story to point a moral against excess in drinking, as an example for a temperance lecture as it were, does not indicate a very high appreciation of the real tragic character of the story, or of the motive of the fateful love-potion But Gower was inclined to be sententious and again in one of he French ballads he mentions Lancelot and Tristram as examples for others of the present, in the feeling words:-

"Commune sont la cronique et l'estoire
De Lancelot et Tristans ensement
Encore maint lour sotie en memoire
Pour ensampler les altres du present."[1]

Of all the illusions that Leopold Sudre[2] has collected from the literature of the Middle Ages these references are the

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[1]Romania XV, p.538. [2]Ibid XV, Les Allusions a la Legende de Tristan, etc., p.534.

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only ones that are in the way of criticism. In the eighth book of Confessio Amantis Tristram and Bele Isolde head the list in the catalogue of lovers.[1]

"Ther was Tristram, which was beleved
With Bele Isolde, and Lancelot
Stode with Gunnor, and Galahot
With his lady, and as me thought
I sigh where Jason him brought
His love, which Creusa hight."

Tristram is also mentioned in Lydgate's "Lif of our Lady", Fol. a, - b[2].

The enumeration of famous names and especially of famous lovers is a common feature of poems that describe "courts of love" or imaginary temples or palaces of Fame, or Love or Honor, which appear to him in his visions; of this class are Chaucer's "Hous of Fame", Lydgate's "Temple of Glas", Douglas' "Palice of Honour", Petrarch,"Trionfi d'Amore" , Boccaccio's "Amorosa Visione", the Intelligenza, and even the Divine Commedia might be included. In the latter, Tristram it will be remembered, is given a place with Paris among the unhappy lovers whom he saw flying through the air as a com-

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[1]Pauli, Confessio Amantis,vol.III,p.359.
[2]Schieck, Lydgate,Temple of Glas,Old Eng.Text.No.60.p.CXX.

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pany of swans:-

"Vidi Paris, Tristano, et piu di mille
Ombre mostrommi e nominolle a dito
Che amor di nostra vita dipartille."[1]

In the catalogue of lovers in Petrarch's "Trionfi d'Amore" (Chap.III) there is the following reference to Tristan and Isolde:-

"Ecco quei che le carte empion di sogni
Lancelotto, Tristano,,e gli altri errant;
Onde conven che'l volgo errante agogni
Vedi Genevra, Isotta, e l'atre amanti."

Since the Italian as well as the French poetry was an important influence on Chaucer and his school these references are of interest.

While Tristram was most famous as the type of faithful lover he was also celebrated as the greatest hunter and he is quoted frequently in the old treatises on the art of hunting. In the account of his education by Sir Roland is given in "Sir Tristrem" we are told:-

"On hunting oft he ȝede,
To swiche a lawe he drewe
Al pus;
More he coube of veneri

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[1] Dante, Inferno V, V line 67.

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Pan coupe Manerious."

In commenting on this passage in his edition of Sir Tristrem Sir Walter Scott says, "Tristrem is uniformly represented as the patron of the chase and the first who reduced hunting to a science."[1] One of the earliest references to him in special connection with hunting is to be found in the early part of the fifteenth century in Juliana Berners Treatise on Hunting where Tristram is mentioned as an authority on the "bestes of venery":[2]

"Me dere sones, where ye fare, by frith or by fell
Take good hede, in his tyme how Tristrem woll tell,
How many maner bestes of venery there are."

Nearly two centuries after this in the "Noble Art of Venerie", (London 1611) there are several references to Tristram as an authority on hunting and the art of venerie. The heading of one of the chapters of this treatise quotes "our old Tristrem" familiarly as an undisputed authority on the subject in hand; the title is as follows: "How you shall rewarde your houndes when they have killed a hare; which the Frenchmen calleth the rewarde, and sometimes the querry, but our old Tristrem calleth it the hollow." In another part of

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[1]Scott, Sir Tristrem,p.387. Quoted by Kölbing vol.II.p.108.
[2]Shipper's English Metrik.

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the work Tristrem is again quoted: "Our Tristram reconeth the bore for one of the four bestes of venerie."[1]

Incidentally in Malory's Morte d'Arthur mention is made of the references in the old books to the fact that it was to Tristram that the art of venery owed all its terms, and whatever of a classification it had of various manners of hawking and hunting; the following is the passage from Book X, Chapter LII:-

"Tristram was at that time the best chaser of the world, and the noblest blower of an horn of all manner of measures. For, as books report, of Sir Tristram came all the good terms of venery and hunting, and all the sizes and measures of blowing of an horn; and of him we had first all the terms of hawking and, which were beasts of close, and beasts of venery and which were vermins, and the manner of games. First to the uncoupling, to the seeking, to the rechate, to the flight to the death, and to strake; and many other blasts and terms all manner of gentlemen have cause to the world; and to praise Sir Tristram, and to pray for his soul."[2] Again in Book VIII, Chapter III, there is a similar reference:-

"And as the book saith, he began good measures for blowing of beasts of venery and beasts of chase, and all manner

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[1] Quoted by Kölbing, vol. II. p. 108. [2] Strachey ed. Morte d'Arthur p. 286.

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of vermins; and all these terms we have yet of hawking and hunting. And therefore the book of venery, of hawking and hunting, is called the book of Sir Tristram."[1]

During the sixteenth century when the translating of French romance into English prose became a more common practice we have Lord Berner's translation of "The Boke of Duke Huon of Burdeux", printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1534. In this Tristram is mentioned as an example of a lover true to death:-

"Huon sayd, 'fayre lady be not abasshyd for if we die for love we shall not be the first for Trystram dyed for the love of the fayre Isoude.'" It might be noticed in passing that in the third edition printed about 1570, the name of the heroine appeared as "Isoluda."

It is to Sir Thomas Mal ory's "Morte d'Arthur" with its collection of Arthurian legends in its style that English literature owes much, for this book has proved a rich quarry from which the gems in the rough were brought forth, to be cut and polished for their setting in English poetry. The various legends of Tristan and Iseult are intertwined with the various threads of the Arthurian story and appear and re-

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[1]Strachey ed. Morte d'Arthur, p. 163.

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appear throughout the book. The various details of the story as they appear in the Morte d'Arthur differ very greatly from the metrical versions that have already been considered, and the naratives have as their source the different French prose versions which came into existence during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. To account for the marked differences in the prose and metrical versions which existed side by side it has been conjectured that the prose romances had as their original the lost poem of Chretien de Troyes[1]. According to the testimony of the so-called Elie de Baron or Helies Borron in an epilogue to his own prose version of Tristan which appears as a part of the "Bret" claim that his work is a continuation of that of Lucas de Gast who was the author of the most ancient prose version. This Lucas de Gast who appears as the author of many of the extant versions of the prose romance of Tristan was a knight of a castle near Salisbury in England according to his own statement, as follows in the first edition printed at Rouen in 1489:-

"Je Luce, Chevalier, seigneur du chasteau de Gast, voisin

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[1]Gaston Paris, Romania, Vol.XV. p.602. "que le Tristan en prose ait eu pour premier noyau une imitation du Tristan de Chrétien, c'est ce qui me parait, pour plus d'une raison, tres vraisemblable."

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proclain de Salesbieres in Angliterre, ay voulu rediger et mettre en volume ou histoire autentique les vertueux, nobles et glorieux faiz du tres vaillant et rensomme chevalier Tristan filz du puissant roy meliadus de Leonoys."[1]

If Lucas de Gast was the real author of the first prose version of the story in French, it was written in England and went from there to France, Spain, Italy and Germany, where the prose versions were more numerous and popular than those in verse.

It is to the Anglo-Norman or French prose version that Malory went for the account of the adventures of Tristan and Iseult which he has given in the "Morte d'Arthur." Following the custom in accordance with which each writer who attempted to treat these romances in prose, Malory edited, revised and combined the stories as he found them to form one complete, though perhaps not always very congruous, narrative. He evidently took advantage of every opportunity to unite the Tristan saga with various stories of the Knights of the Round Table, for although the connections of Tristan with Arthur's court is not a vital point in the story, it would scarcely be suggested by Malory's narrative that the

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[1]Vetter, La Legende de Tristan, p. 56.

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Tristan legends were quite independent of the Arthurian romance.

A comparison of the narrative of Tristan's life and adventures as they appear in Sir Tristrem with the account in Malory is instructive as showing how these romances grew in the hands of successive editors until they took on the bulky proportions of the heroic romances. Too often, however, these added episodes detracted from the original simplicity and directness of the original story. Not satisfied with the opportunities which the original story offered for displaying Tristan's prowess in battle by the contests with Morhold, and Urgan, the later romancers described him as meeting and defeating all the knights of the court and even overcoming King Arthur himself in the lists. Since Malory followed these prose romancers we find the later forms of the story in the Morte d'Arthur.

According to Malory Tristram's parents were Meliodas of Liones and Elizabeth sister of Mark of Cornwall, instead of Roland and Blancheflour, and Cornwall and Leones were dependencies of King Arthur's. Of Tristram's name Malory has Elizabeth say in dying shortly after his birth:-

"When he is christened let call him Tristram, that is as much as to say as a sorrowful birth." Of his early youth he relates an incident concerning an attempt to poison Tris-

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tan by a jealous step-mother. For his education he is sent to France where he learns to harp and hunt.

His victorious combat with Marhaus (Marhold) and his first journey to Ireland are essentially the same as narrated in the metrical versions. The motive for the latter is more natural than in the other stories; a soothsayer informs Tristram that his wound can only be successfully treated in the land from whence the venom originally came, hence the journey to Ireland, the land of Marhaus. His return from Ireland is followed by a series of adventures of which no mention is made in this earlier form of the story; among these is a combat with King Mark for the love of a lady, in which the king meets defeat, and out of hatred sends Tristram on the dangerous mission to Ireland to secure Iseult.

According to Malory Tristram and Iseult had formed an attachment on the occasion of his first visit, for they exchanged rings and he promised to be her knight for "all the days of his life," and she agreed not to marry for seven years without his consent. After setting out for Ireland he is driven back to England by storms and overcomes King Anguish of Ireland at the court of Arthur; as a reward for sparing the king he demands La Beale Isoud, King Anguish's daughter, for Mark. The description of the love potion and

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the fatal draught differs somewhat from the other versions and is as follows:-

"So to make a short conclusion, La Beale Isoud was made ready to go with Sir Tristram, and dame Bragwaine went with her for her chief gentlewoman, with many others. Then the queen, Isoud's mother, gave to her and dame Bragwaine, her daughter's gentlewoman, and unto Gouvernail, a drink and charged them that what day Mark should wed, that same day they should give him that drink, so that King Mark should drink to La Beale Isoud; and then, said the queen, I undertake either shall love others the days of their life. So this drink was given unto dame Bragwaine and unto Gouvernail. And then anon Sir Tristram took the sea and La Beale Isoud; and when they were in their cabin, it happened that they were thirsty and they saw a little flacket of gold stand by them, and it seemed by the color and the taste that it was noble wine. Then Sir Tristram took the flacket in his hand, and said, Madam Isoud, here is the best drink that ever ye drank, that dame Bragwaine, your maiden, and Gouvernail my servant, have kept for themselves. Then they laughed and made good cheer, and either drank to other freely, and they thought never drink that ever they drank to other was so sweet nor so good. But by that their drink was in their bodies, they

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loved either other so well that never their love departed for weal neither for woe. And thus it happened the love betwixt Sir Tristram and Le Beale Isoud, the which love never departed the days of their life."[1]

It is not to the present purpose to enter upon the details of Tristram's career as Malory chronicles it; suffice it to say of the adventures in general that it is very evident that the institutions of chivalry produced a marked change in the story, and from a simple straightforward account of the few incidents in the life of Tristram and Isolde, it became one protracted series of jousts, tournaments and battles, in which as might be expected the hero covers himself with glory, but which does not add to the effectiveness of the narrative.

The relations of Tristram to Isoud La Blanche Mains is briefly treated; he went to Petit Britain according to Malory to have Isoud la Blanche Mains heal his wound, he marries her, returns to Wales with his wife, is rebuked by the Knights for his infidelity to Brittany with his bride and finally deserts her for La Beale Isoud. He afterwards suffers for madness, the chronicle relates, and finally is killed by King

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[1]Strachey ed. "Morte d'Arthur", Bk.VIII. Chap.XXIV.p.181.

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Mark. This ending of the Tristan story marks the prose romances distinctly from the metrical versions. With Malory and all the French prose versions with one exception the poetical and tragic story of the two black and white sails is not mentioned. The account of the death of Tristram and Isoud in the Morte d'Arthur is as follows:-

"Also that traitor king slew the noble knight Sir Tristram, as he sat harping afore his lady Le Beale Isoud, with a trenchant glaive, for whose death was much bewailing of every knight that ever were in Arthur's days; and there were never none so bewailed as was Sir Tristram and Sir Lamorak for they were traitorously slain, Sir Tristram by King Mark and Sir Lamorak by Sir Gawaine and his brethern. And this Sir Bellangere revenged the death of his father Alisander, and Sir Tristram, slew King Mark, and La Beale Isoud died, swooning upon the cross of Sir Tristram, whereof was great pity, and allthat were with King Mark, that were consenting to the death of Sir Tristram were slain, as Sir Andrew and every other."[1] Unfortunately it was this decidedly weak ending that Tennyson adapted in touching on the story of Tristan in the "Idylls of the King." Again in Book XX, chapter VI, Launcelot speaks of the death of Tristram:-

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[1] Strackley, Morte d'Arthur, pp. 448-9, Bk. XIX, Chap. XI.

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"For when by means of treaties Sir Tristram brought again La Beale Isoud unto King Mark from Joyous Gard, look what befell on the lad, how shamefully that false traitor Mark slew him as he sat harping afore his lady La Beale Isoud, with a grounden glaive he thrust him in behind to the breast. It grieveth me, said Sir Launcelot, to speak of his death, for all the world may not find such a knight."

Malory's compilation of the Arthurian legends coming as it did at the close of the mediaeval period was a veritable storehouse into which was gathered the rich harvest of legends which the Middle Age had produced. While by its subject matter the Morte d'Arthur is linked to the past, the form into which Malory put his work was quite modern, in fact it may be said to mark the beginning of the modern prose style, At the same time the quaintness of style to the modern reader adds not a little of the charm of the work, and is quite in accord with the spirit of the old story. It is the fact that it has preserved the old legends in an enduring form that he made the Morte d'Arthur the golden treasury from which the modern poets and artists have drawn so largely for their inspiration.

As the Morte d'Arthur represents the tendency of the last years of chivalry to combine the Arthurian romances into

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a single connected narrative, a work that was also undertaken by Rusticien of Pisa and Ulrich Fürterer, so there was likewise a disintegrating movement that tended to resolve the separate romances into simpler elements. The result of this second tendency was the ballads that took for the subject a single incident or episode of the romance, and gave to it a separate existence. Of the more ambitious of these shorter works are the story of "Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight"[1] and the metrical "Morte d'Arthur."[2] The shorter popular ballads were also developed in the course of time, on the various episodes.

Since the measure of the English "Sir Tristrem" has not a little of the ballad movement and therefore might easily have furnished subjects for the ballads, it seems somewhat strange that there should not have been any ballads of Tristan. Such however is evidently the case for none of the ballad collections contain the story of the lovers, or any of the adventures of the hero. On the continent are found stories of "Tristan disguised as fool" and "Tristan as monk" both of which correspond in length to the English pieces of "Sir Gawayne" and "Morte d'Arthur" already mentioned. Neither of the episodes in Tristan's career were current in England, and no ballad po-

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[1] Old English Text, No.4, edited by Morris. [2] Old English Text, No.8, edited by E. Brock.

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etry dealing with his adventures, if any ever existed, has come down to the present time.

The decay of chivalry and the influence of the renaissance soon made the old romance a thing of the past, and it disappeared almost completely when the riches of Italian and classic literature were poured out over England; and especially when the drama became the popular form. Mediaeval traditions and legends faded from view as the new poetry of the renaissance with its classic models began to rise. And from the Elizabethan period until the Romantic revival at the close of the last century Arthur and his charmed circle were under a Merlinlike spell from which they could not escape.

The last great epic of chivalry, though coming within the reign of Elizabeth, and bearing on its face the influence of the new movement in the world of letters, harks back to the good old days of "fierce warres and faithfull loves" the days of Arthur and the Table Round. Spenser in writing the Faerie Queen was under the spell of the romantic traditions and consciously strove to reproduce in form and manner the life of the days of chivalry. At the same time he could not escape from the new spirit of the age which had brought a refinement of poetical form from the classics that was quite foreign to the poetry of the middle ages. In the al-

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legorical treatment of his subject he again returns to the times of the "Romaunt de la Rose" and the mediaeval allegories; so that in his masterpiece are to be found the blending of the three elements.

To glorify England, her Queen and her Church, to teach the lessen of the cardinal virtues, with the story of Arthur and his Knights as a foundation was certainly a noble undertaking, but an undertaking that would require the greatest genius. Spenser has accomplished the purpose for which the Faerie Queen was written, but in doing so, the Arthurian story became a mere framework which when decked with the brilliant colors of Spenser's poetry, was almost lost sight of, and was scarcely to be recognized. The heroic proportions of the original legends are so reduced that King Arthur becomes a shadowy figure and the few knights of the Round Table that appear, mere spectres.

Tristan from the hero of a great romance, becomes, but a squire whose single adventure is told in less than a canto, while the faithful Iseult and their immortal love are entirely forgotten. In the second canto of the sixth book with the legend of Sir Calidore, as the exemplification of courtesie, Tristram appears as the young squire who slays a proud discourteous knight. The encounter is quite characteristic

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of the courage, prowess, and chivalry of Tristan of the legends, though at this time he was but "a slender slip that scarse did see yet, seventeen years, but tall and faire of face."[1] Such an exploit in defense of a fair lady in distress could not but command the attention of the courteous Sir Calidore, and he seeks to know more of the young candidate for knighthood. In the following stanzas Spenser has Tristram tell the story of his life, a story which differs materially from all the other accounts of his birth and early life except that with Malory it makes his father King Meliogras of Cornwall; he says:-

"Then wote ye that I am a Briton borne,
Sonne of a King, (however thorough fate
Or fortune I my countrie have forlone,
And lost the Crowne which should my head by right (adorne.

"And Tristram is my name; the onely heire
Of good King Meliogras which did rayne
In Cornewale, till that he through lives despeire
Untimely dyde, before I did attaine
Ripe yeares of reason, my right to maintaine:
After whose death his brother, seeing mee

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[1]Faerie Queen,Bk.VI, canto II,5.

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An infant, weake a Kingdome to sustaine,
Upon him tooke the roiall high degree,
And sent me, where him list, instructed for to be.

"The widow queene my mother, which then hight
Faire Emiline, conceiving then great feare
Of my fraile safetie, resting in the might
Of him that did the Kingly Scepter beare,
Whose gealous dread induring not a peare
Is wont to cut off all that doubt may breed;
Thought best away me to remove somewhere
Into some forrein Land, whereas no need
Of dreaded daunger might his doubtfull humor feed.

"So, taking counsell of a wise man red,
She was by him adviz'd to send me quight
Out of the Countrie wherein I was bred,
The which the fertile Lionesse is hight,
Into the Land of Faerie, where no wight
Should weet of me, nor worke me any wrong:
To whose wise read she hearkning sent me streight
Into this Land, where I have wond thus long
Since I was ten yeares old, now grown to stature (strong.

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"All which my daies I have not lewdly spent,
Nor spilt the blossome of my tender yeares
In ydlenesse; but, as was convenient,
Have trayned bene with many noble feres
In gentle thewes and such like seemly,leres:
Mongst which my most delight hath alwaies been
To hunt the salvage chace, amongst my peres,
Of all that raungeth in the forrest greene,
Of which none is to me unknowne that ev'r was seene.

"Ne is there hauke which mantleth her on pearch,
Whether high towring or accoasting low,
But I the measure of her flight doe search,
And all her pray and all her diet know:
Such be our joyes which in these forrests grow:
Onely the use of armes, which most I joy,
And fitteth most for noble Swayne to know,
I have not tasted yet; yet past a Boy,
And being now high time these strong joynts to imploy.

"Therefore, good Sir, sith how occasion fit
Doth fall, whose like hereafter seldome may,
Let me this crave, unworthy though of it,
That ye will make me Squire without delay,

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That from henceforth in batteilous array
I may beare armes, and learne to use them right;
The rather, since that fortune hath this day
Given to me the spoile of this dead Knight,
These goodly gilden armes which I have won in fight."

Tristram's traditional skill as a huntsman is suggested by the lines:-

"Mongst which my most delight hath alwaies been
To hunt the salvage chace, amongst my peres,
Of all that raungeth in the forrest greene,
Of which none is to me unknown that ev'r was seene."

As well as in the lines in the opening part of the canto where Tristram is described as

"All in a Woodman's jacket he was clad
Of Lincolne greene, belayd with silver lace;
And on his head an hood with aglets sprad,
And by his side his hunters horne he hanging had."

The traditions of his skill in hunting, and as the authority on the art of venery, survived at least to the time of the "Arte of Venerie" in 1611 as has already been noticed.

With this mention in the Faerie Queen Tristan disappears entirely from English literature, as far as can be determined,

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for over two hundred and fifty years, when with the revival of interest in the Middle Age and its legends, he again appears in the poems of Tennyson, Arnold and Swinburne.

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Chapter V.

Modern English Versions.

Arnold and Tennyson.

To the eighteenth century the middle age was a sealed book, into which none of the Augustans would deign to look; everything that was mediaeval was dismissed with the epithet "Gothic" which was synonymous with all that was uncouth and barbaric, belonging to the childhood of the race. It is not surprising that the mediaeval romances shared the same fate as the other work of that period. Dr. Johnson, who stands as the foremost critic of the age of prose and reason sums up the whole attitude of his age toward the Arthurian story in his introduction to Shakespeare when he writes; "Nations like individuals have their infancy. Whatever is remote from common appearances is always welcome to vulgar, as to childish credulity; and of a country unenlightened by learning, the whole people is vulgar. The study of those who then aspired to plebian learning was laid out upon adventures, giants, dragons, and enchantments. The Death of Arthur was the favorite volume." An age that took this attitude toward the past and its legends would have looked upon it as a disgrace to treat such a childish subject. But almost the very year (1764) that this dictum was uttered there

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appeared four works that indicated the revival of an interest in the period so unqualifiedly denounced.

The poetry of Chatterton (1764-70) and of McPherson (1760-63) with his Ossianic fragments of supposed Celtic poetry together with Evan's "Specimens of the Ancient Welsh Bards" (1764) and that greatest of all influences in the new movement Bishop Percy's Reliques of English Poetry (1765) coming together as they do within a period of five years show plainly in what direction the tide of popular taste was turning despite what Dr. Johnson might think of such work. The so-called mediaeval revival was just beginning to be felt in this period, but with the additional impetus given it by Scott, Wordsworth and Coleridge it was to become one of the great forces that should determine the course of English song in the nineteenth century. The reaction having once set in the popular taste, long since wearied by the dead level of perfection of Augustan conventionality, sought eagerly for the more stimulating and interesting works that breathed the spirit of the spontaneous life of some natural age with all its mystery and supernaturalism. Under these circumstances the magic spell that held King Arthur in thrall was sure to be broken, and the wealth of Arthurian legend would again become the property of the poet.

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One of the first to venture in the new field was Thomas Wharton with his poem the "Grave of King Arthur"(1777);Wharton had already discussed the Arthurian legends and King Arthur as an historical character, as well as the various Arthurian romances in his best volume of History of English Poetry(1774). The romance of Tristan and Iseult had received considerable attention in his history, and Thomas of Erceldoune's Sir Tristrem was treated at length. Without attempting to trace the growth of the interest in Arthurian lore, we can consider that part of it that refers particularly to the Tristan saga.

In 1804 Sir Walter Scott, to whom the mediaeval revival owed so much, edited the old English romance of Sir Tristrem, as has already been noticed, and added the conclusion which had been lost. The successive editions through which the work passed indicate that considerable interest was awakened in the old story, and it might have been expected to bear more immediate fruit in inspiring the poets with new poetical material. In 1816 two independent editions of the Malory's Morte d'Arthur were published with a modernized text and the following year Southey's edition, a supposed reprint of the original Caxton, appeared, so that this charmingly quaint old mine of Arthurian traditions was again opened to the reading

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public.

The first time that Tristan appears in English poetry after Scott, Sir Tristrem was in Wordsworth's "The Egyptian Maid"(1830) in which it will be remembered the poet used the figure of Arthur and his knights in an original manner for the frame-work of his poem. The stanza descriptive of Tristram is the one with which we are particularly interested as indicating Wordsworth's feeling toward the old story. In the following lines he describes the hero as he comes forward to touch the maiden:-

"Next, disencumbered of his harp,
Sir Tristram, dear to thousands as a brother,
Came to the proof, nor grieved that there ensued
No change;- the fair Izonda he had wooed
With love too true, a love with pangs too sharp,
From hope too distant, not to dread another."

It was not until the second half of the present century that the Tristan saga became the subject of a poem in English. In 1852 was published Matthew Arnold's Tristram and Iseult, twenty years later Tennyson's Last Tournament (1872) appeared, and at the end of the next decade Swinburne published his Tristram of Lyonesse(1882). Thus in a quarter of the century the story of Tristan and Iseult has been given a

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more prominent place than it occupied at almost any other time in the history of English literature.

Why Arnold should have chosen the story for the subject of a poem is rather difficult to see; the character of the story in its usual form would scarcely seem to be such as would attract him. The mediaeval spirit does not animate any of his other poems, nor in fact is it found in Tristram and Iseult, which is distinctly modern as was the character of Arnold's genius. As it was he did not choose the whole story but only the closing scenes, and even in these he has modified the original form and given so distinctly a modern turn of the incidents that, scarcely anything remains except the mediaeval setting. The old story of the white and black sails which has in it such poetical possibilities he fails to employ, Iseult of Cornwall and Tristan are permitted to meet for a last time in Brittany before the hero's death, and the surviving Iseult of Brittany with her children occupy the last part of the poem. Though the poem proper is concerned with the last scenes the method of narration which the poet adopts makes it possible to relate the principal events of the whole story.

The poem is divided into three parts, each of which takes its title from the three great actors in the story,

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Tristram, Iseult of Ireland and Iseult of Brittany. In each part Arnold varies the metrical form to suit the manner of treatment; a considerable portion of the first part is in the form of a dramatic dialogue alternating with descriptive passages and the greater part is in the dramatic form, closing with a descriptive passage.

The poem opens with the scene where Tristram lies dying in his castle in Brittany, tenderly cared for by his faithful wife Iseult of the White Hands. He is anxiously awaiting tidings of the arrival of his old love Iseult of Ireland.

"Is she not come? The messenger was sure.
Prop me upon the pillows once again.
Raise me, my page! this cannot long endure."

In the ravings of the fever Tristram reverts to the events of his past life, living again the stirring scene in which he had taken part. The opening lines are followed by a long descriptive passage in which Arnold takes occasion to give the setting to his poem. In describing Tristram he adopts the Arthurian version of the story, and touches on his fame as harper and hunter.

"I know him by his harp of gold,
Famous in Arthur's court of old;
I know him by his forest-dress,-

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The peerless hunter, harper, knight,

Tristram of Lyoness."

In placing the scene in a "wild December night" with "the bleak sea-gale beating from the Atlantic seas on this coast of Brittany" the poet has a setting that harmonizes very well with the spirit of the poem. In the delirium of fever Tristram's mind wanders back to the "some fair unwintry sea, not this fierce Atlantic deep" to the time when he was returning with Iseult from Ireland, when before them lay "the sweet green fields of Wales", and he recalls Iseult's words and the fatal potion:-

"Ah! would I were in those green fields at play,

Not pent on shipboard this delicious day!

Tristram, I pray thee, of thy courtesy,

Reach me my golden cup that stands by thee,

But pledge me in it first for courtesy."

And so the poet would picture the scene of the love-potion that rises before Tristram, in his vision exclaims,

"Ah, sweet angels, let him dream!

. . . . . .

Let her, as she sits on board,

-Ah! sweet saints, unwittingly!-

See it shine, and take it up,

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And to Tristram laughing say,-
'Sir Tristram, of thy courtesy,
Pledge me in my golden cup.'
Let them drink it; let their hands
Tremble, and their cheeks be flame,
As they feel the fatal bands
Of a love they dare not name,
With a wild delicious pain,
Twine about their hearts again!"

The following picture is of the last parting of Tristram and Iseult, of his exile, his journey to Brittany, and his happy life with Iseult of the White Hands:-

"-Ah! 'tis well he should retrace
His tranquil life in this lone place;
His gentle bearing at the side
Of his timid youthful bride;
His long rambles by the shore
On winter-evenings, when the roar
Of the near waves came, sadly grand,
Through the dark, up the drowned sand;
Or his endless reveries
In the woods, where the gleams play
On the grass under the trees,

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Passing the long summer's day
Idle as a mossy stone
In the forest-depths alone,
The chase neglected, and his hound
Couched beside him on the ground."

Arnold makes Tristram one of the knights who went in Arthur's train in the campaign against the Roman emperor, and the exciting scenes of battle are recalled:-

"-His sword is sharp, his horse is good;
Beyond the mountains will he see
The famous towns of Italy,
And label with the blessed sign
The heathen Saxons on the Rhine.
At Arthur's side he fights once more
With the Roman Emperor."

The closing stanzas of the first part are the best in the poem, but as they are descriptive of Iseult of Brittany and her children, they have no connection with the old legends, and aside from this fact are quite modern in tone. The lines describing the children in their sleep are the finest in the poem but the passage is too often quoted to be given at length; the opening lines are,

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"But they sleep in sheltered rest,
Like helpless birds in the warm nest,
On the castle's southern side;"

The second part describes the meeting of Tristram and Iseult of Ireland; here again Arnold departs entirely from the original story, and the course of the action is entirely the poet's own. Replying to Tristram's reproach "Late thou comest, cruel hast thou been" and to the fear he expressed that perhaps her love has been changed, Iseult replies

"Altered, Tristram? Not in courts, believe me,
Love like mine is altered in the breast:
Courtly life is light, and cannot reach it;
Ah! it lives, because so deep-suppressed!

What! thou think'st men speak in courtly chambers
Words by which the wretched are consoled?
What! thou think'st this aching brow was cooler,
Circled, Tristram, by a band of gold?

Royal state with Marc, my deep-wronged husband,—
That was bliss to make my sorrows flee!
Silken courtiers whispering honeyed nothings,—
Those were friends to make me false to thee!

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Ah! on which, if both our lots were balanced,
Was indeed the heaviest burden thrown,-
Thee, a pining exile in thy forest,
Me, a smiling queen upon my throne?"

In the last scene where the lovers lie in the castle hall faithful even unto death, Arnold gets more of the mediaeval atmosphere than in any other part of the poem, though the conception of the huntsman on the arras musing on the events that he has witnessed is quite modern.

Between this and the third and last part of the poem

"A year had flown, and o'er the sea away,
In Cornwall, Tristram and Queen Iseult lay;,
In King Marc's chapel, in Tyntagel old:
There in a ship they bore those lovers cold."

This portion of the poem describes Iseult of Brittany as she wanders sorrowfully by the sea with her two children:-

"Warm in their mantles wrapped, the three stood there
Under the hollies, in the clear still air,-
Mantles with those rich furs deep glistering
Which Venice ships do from swart Egypt bring.
Long they stayed still, then, pacing at their ease,
Moved up and down under the glossy trees;
But still, as they pursued their warm dry road,

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From Iseult's lips the unbroken story flowed,
And still the children listened, their blue eyes
Fixed on their mother's face in wide surprise.

. . . . . .

She told them of the fairy-haunted land
Away the other side of Brittany,
Beyond the heaths, edged by the lonely sea;
Of the deep forest-glades of Broce-liande,
Through whose green boughs the golden sunshine
creeps,
Where Merlin by the enchanted thorn-tree sleeps.
For here he came with the fay Vivian.

. . . . . .

And in that daisied circle, as men say,
Is Merlin prisoner till the judgment-day;
But she herself whither she will can rove -
For she was passing weary of his love."

In the story of Merlin doomed to abide "a prisoner till the judgment-day" on that "little plot of magic ground" it has been suggested that Iseult saw her own fate mirrored. The story of Merlin is spoken of as "an old-world Breton history" while in the old legends the enchantment took place at a time when Tristram was still a boy, and would scarcely have been

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spoken of as an "old-world history" by Iseult.

In writing of Arnold's poem Andrew Lang says:-

"In M. Arnold's brief poem of the death of Tristram, the passage which haunts us is all his own, owes nothing to Malory or the French books, the beautiful passage on the children of Iseult. (Already mentioned and quoted in part) But the mere presence of the children is rather disconcerting to those who remember the more classic versions of the old tale. The picture of the Breton Iseult as being wife and mother, who even unloved cherishes the hand that slights her, whose constant look is like a sad embrace, and who seeks for consolation in the nursery, has a disturbing effect on one's associations. And so has the companion picture of the Irish Iseult."[1] The last part besides being at entire variance with the original story comes as something of an anticlimax after the tragic death of the two lovers, which found a natural close for the story.

It is to be regretted that Arnold did not make use of the story of the black and white sails, the poetical possibilities of which he evidently appreciated for he wrote to a friend upon the appearance of Swinburne's Tristram of Lyon-

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[1] Introductory Essay, Sommer's Malory, vol. III. quoted by Maccallum.

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esse:- "He has taken the story answering to the old Theseus story of the black and white sails and a very fine story it is for practical purposes."[1] He was evidently not so favorably impressed by Wagner's treatment of the story in his music drama of "Tristan and Isolde" for we find him writing from Munich in 1886:- "The day before yesterday. . .I went to the opera to see Tristram (sic) and Iseult (sic). I may say that I have managed the story better than Wagner. The second act is interminable and without any action. The hero and heroine sit on a sofa and sing to one another about light and darkness and their connexion with love. . . at the end of the second act I was worn out and came away. The third act is better,I imagine. But even in that, less is made of the story than might be made."[2]

On the whole Arnold's poem from the fact that it treats but a portion of the story, that it departs so widely from the accepted versions of the story, and that throughout the poem is entirely modern in tone, can scarcely be considered as an adequate treatment of the Tristan story.

Tennyson's Last Tournament.

About the time that Arnold published Tristram and Iseult

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[1]Arnold, Letters, vol.II. p.232. [2]Ibid. vol.II. p.374.

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Tennyson seems to have changed the original plan of a long poem on the Arthurian legends of which his Morte d'Arthur was supposed to be a part, and chose the idyllic form for the single episodes. In carrying out this plan he wrote Enid and Nimuë ,the True and the False in 1857, and this was published the following year as two poems under the titles "Enid" and "Vivien" together with "Guinevere" and "Elaine". In 1869 "The Holy Grail" and "Pelleas and Ettarre" appeared and the series of Idylls was then well under way. The Last Tournament was written and printed in 1871 and published the following year with "Gareth and Lynette".

The form of the idyll which Tennyson chose for these episodes for the Arthurian story, was well adapted to the subject, and was a practical solution of the difficulty of treating adequately an epical subject without putting it in the epic form. Malory's Morte d'Arthur supplemented by Lady Guest's translation of the Mabinogion furnished Tennyson with the materials for the Idylls, and as a comparison with the former shows, many of the phrases have been taken from the Morte d'Arthur. In the Last Tournament Tennyson takes up the Tristan story at considerable length, so it is with this one of the Idylls of the King that we are particularly concerned. The poet did not see fit to devote one of the Idylls

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entirely to the story, for it would not have served his general purpose in the series to do so. Unfortunately the purpose for which he does make use of the story is to illustrate the decline of chivalry and the impending dissolution of the Table Round. In so doing he not only finds it necessary to change the very essence of the story, but also to blacken the character of the hero.

In Tennyson's hands the story loses all of its tragic interest and becomes the mere record of the fatal ending of an intrigue in the court that has undergone moral decay. In the form in which it appears in the Last Tournament it serves to point the moral which the poet is undertaking to illustrate, but when compared with the original story and the possibilities which it contains, it seems a wretched degradation of a noble subject. The points in which Tennyson's version agrees with the old stories, are taken from Malory's Morte d'Arthur, but the character of Tristan is not that which is given him by Malory. The greatest fault that is to be found with Tennyson's version is that it omits entirely the motive of the love-potion, without which the whole story falls to the ground. From lovers whose destiny was not of their own making, whose love was the work of fate, they are degraded to the level of those unfaithful alike to the bonds

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of marriage, kinship, and loyalty. Tristan, the courteous, chivalrous knight of the old legends, insultingly flaunts the prize before the ladies, and tells them it is not for them, and the murmur is heard that "all courtesy is dead". Instead of being the fate-impelled victim of love, he boldly proclaims his motto as

"Free love - free field - we love but while we may."

His bitter bantering tone does not ring true for the Tristan of the legends; in fact were the names changed the original story would never be suggested by the characters or their actions.

As to a comparison of the minor details of the story in the Last Tournament and the other versions, there are some points of interest. In the opening lines Tristan appears in his traditional character as harper, and in the tournament which had taken place the day before he is described as

". . armour'd all in forest green, whereon
There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,
And wearing but a holly-spray for crest,
With ever-scattering berries, and on shield
A spear, a harp, a bugle. . ."

evident references to his skill as a warrior, harper and huntsman. In appearing in this tournament of dead innocence

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he is described as

. . . ."late

From overseas in Brittany return'd,

And marriage with a princess of that realm,

Isolt the White"

With his old time prowess Tristram drove one knight after the other to the bounds and was declared the victor; and when taunted by Lancelot as he received the prize advised him to

"Be happy in thy fair Queen as I in mine."

"And Tristram round the gallery made his horse

Caracole; then bow'd his homage, bluntly saying,

'Fair damsels, each to him who worships each

Sole Queen of Beauty and of love, behold

This day my Queen of Beauty is not here.'

And most of these were mute, some anger'd, one

Murmuring, 'All courtesy is dead', and one,

'The glory of our Round Table is no more.'"

Returning to the first scene; when the Fool and Tristram appear, the latter is made to sing a song to which he asks Sir Dagonet to "harken if my music be not true"

"Free love - free field - we love but while we may:

The woods are hushed, their music is no more:

The leaf is dead, the yearning past away:

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New leaf,new life - the days of frost are o'er:

New life,new love, to suit the newer day:

New loves are sweet as those that went before:

Free love - free field - we love but while we may."

Such sentiments hardly accord with those of one who suffered as Tristram had done in his faithfulness to a love that brought only trouble and unhappiness to himself, and who had remained faithful to old love, even in marrying Iseult of Brittany.

Leaving the company of the fool, he turns his horse toward "Lyonesse and the west" to Queen Iseult, and as he rides he recalls the past, and the days when he had left Iseult and he asks himself:-

"But then what folly had sent him overseas
After she left him lonely here? a name?
Was it the name of one in Brittany,
Isolt,the daughter of the King? 'Isolt
Of the white hands' they call'd her:the sweet name
Allured him first,and then the maid herself,
Who served him well with those white hands of hers,
And loved him well,until himself had thought
He loved her also, wedded easily,
But left her all as easily, and return'd.

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The black-blue Irish hair and Irish eyes

Had drawn him home. . ."

In giving the character of Marc as it appears and of Iseult in her conversation with Tristram after their meeting, Tennyson follows Malory in making him thoroughly despicable, rather than the much wronged and suspicious but not evil minded man of the earlier stories. The conversation of Iseult and Tristan takes on the prevailing tone of the whole poem and does not correspond to the conception of their feelings and relations in the original legends. For example when Iseult speaks to Tristram of the enmity of Mark:-

"O hunter, and O blower of the horn,

Harper, and thou hast been a rover too,

For, ere I mated with my shambling king,

Ye twain had fallen out about the bride

Of one - his name is out of me - the prize,

If prize she were -(what marvel - she could see)-

Thine,friend; and ever since my craven seeks

To wreck thee villainously: but,O Sir Knight,

What dame or damsel have ye kneel'd to last?"

And again in rebuking Tristram for the discourtesy he has shown her she says:-

"Far other was the Tristram,Arthur's knight!

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But thou, thro' ever harrying thy wild beasts)
Save that to touch a harp, tilt with a lance
Becomes thee well - art grown wild beast thyself."

And she spoke better than she knew for Tristram of the Last Tournament is not "Tristram, Arthur's knight" nor the courteous, chivalrous hero of the legends.

In his account of Tristram's death Tennyson follows Malory and the prose romances that relate how the "false traitor King Mark slew him as he sat harping afore his lady La Beale Isoud, with a grounden glaive he thrust him in behind to the heart."[1]

"But, while he bow'd to kiss the jewell'd throat,
Out of the dark, just as the lips had touched,
Behind him rose a shadow and a shriek -
'Mark's way', said Mark, and clove him thro' the brain."[2]

In criticism of Tennyson's use of the Tristan story in the "Last Tournament", the opinion of Stopford Brooke, always a sympathetic and appreciative critic of Tennyson's work, may be quoted; in his volume on Tennyson he writes:-

"The introduction of this Tristram story no doubt enhances, in another form, the whole of the ethical lesson to

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[1] Strachey, Morte d'Arthur, Bk.
[2] For variant reading of first edition(1871) see Nicoll, Lit. Anec. of 19th. Cen., vol. II. p. 256.

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nations and to individuals which is contained in the first part, but I feel from the point of view of art that there are strong objections to the whole of it.

"First, the old story of Tristram and Isolt is entirely changed and degraded. Tristram is not the Tristram we know, nor Isolt our Isolt; they are both vulgarized. All the romance is taken out of them; their great and inevitable love is turned into a common intrigue. Their mighty sorrow, which has drawn the heart of the world to it, which so many poems have made into a purification of the soul, and to which Wagner gave all his strength, is left untouched by Tennyson. Nay, their characters, as he draws them, are incapable of such a sorrow. No one has a right to alter out of recognition two characters in one of the great poetic stories of the world, and to blacken them. Tennyson ought to have had more reverence for a great tale, and more intuition. What he does is all the worse because portions of the ancient story are kept and dwelt on, so that we are forced to think back over the whole tale we know, and to see through this travesty the noble things which have been travestied. To make a great tale in this fashion the stalking-horse of morality, to use it for a passing shot at adultery, to degrade characters which are not degraded, is an iniquity in art. If Tennyson

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wanted to do this kind of thing for the sake of a moral end, he ought to have left the beautiful romance alone, and to have invented a quite new story for his purpose.

"Moreover, this piece about Tristram and Isolt was quite unnecessary. The story told of them may, as I said, enhance by a fresh example the ethical aim of the first part; but it is weaker than the first part, and the lesson is as strong without it. The additional weight given by it is not worth the artistic mistake the poet makes in introducing it. The reader, made angry by the degradation of Tristram and Isolt, becomes angry also with the moralities of the beginning of the Idyll. The first part says all that was necessary to say, and says it well.

"Thirdly, to shove in at the end, and into a corner, an immense story of human passion, covering as many years and as many events as the story of Lancelot himself, was a complete mistake. Tristram introduced as the victor in the jousts is well enough, and we may even endure his soulless talk, though it falsifies his ancient character; but to attempt to force a story, which is like a great sea, into this narrow pool, is beyond endurance, especially when the first event(that of the love-drink)which, by making the love of these two inevitable, raises the tale into fatefulness, is

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deliberately left out. It would have, by excusing them, spoilt the ethical use which Tennyson makes of their story. This is too bad of him.

"Moreover, Tristram and Isolt take us away from the main contention. At the very moment when the whole conception of Tennyson should have been concentrated into white light, in which everything else should be lost, around Arthur and Lancelot and Guinevere, we are carried away to Tintagil, and forced to remember at that distant place the whole of the Tristram story. It would have been far better to have omitted it altogether, and to have told, for the second part of this Idyll, the history of the last meeting of Lancelot and Guinevere, of the treachery of Modred, and of the flight of Guinevere, which at present is told in the Idyll of Guinevere. These belong to this Idyll properly, for when Arthur returns from his expedition to the north, he finds Guinevere gone. Then too, the expedition to the north could be told in its proper place. Tennyson would not have been obliged to drag it in, like a belated recollection, in the middle of Tristram's ride through the forest. These, then, are the unfortunate things into which the ethical direction of a work of art, when it is primary and not secondary, forces an artist."[1]

[1] Brooke, Tennyson, His Art and Relation to Modern Life, p.346 seq.

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Chapter VI.

Modern English Poems (continued).

Swinburne's "Tristram of Lyonesse."

The only modern English poem that undertakes to treat the whole of the Tristan saga, and that can fairly be compared to the original French poems "Sir Tristram" and the old German epic of Gottfried's is Swinburne's "Tristram of Lyonesse," even though in fulness of detail it does not approach any of them; but this is due to the method of narration chosen, for the poem is nearly twice the length of "Sir Tristrem" even with the longer line. The poem was published in 1882 in a volume bearing the title "Tristram of Lyonesse and Other Poems", though a portion of it - the prelude - had already appeared in an obscure Christmas annual. Swinburne was evidently impressed by the story many years before the "Tristram" was written, for while still at Oxford as a young man of twenty, he contributed a poem on the story of Tristan and Iseult to the Undergraduate Papers, a short-lived publication, three numbers of which were issued between December 1857 and April 1858. The first number contained a poem entitled "Queen Yseult, Canto I, 'Of the birth of Sir Tristram, and how he voyaged into Ireland'."[1]

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[1]Nicoll, Lit. Anec. of 19th Century, vol. II. p. 292.

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This production covered some nine pages (demy octavo) and was evidently intended to be the first part of a longer poem, more of which might have been given to the world if the "Undergraduate Papers" had enjoyed a longer existence. It is not a loss to the world's literature that more of it was not written if all would have been of the quality of the first canto, nor is it to be deplored that the "Undergraduate Papers" have become very rare, and only three copies are known to be in existence; for Swinburne was not far from the truth when in a letter several years since he characterized it as "some awful doggerel on the subject of Tristram and Iseult," if we are to judge the whole of some twenty-five stanzas quoted by Dr.Nicoll.[1] As an indication of the general style of "Queen Iseult" the stanzas in which the young Tristram confronts the usurper Moronde, Morgan of the other versions;-

"To the King came Tristram then
To Moronde the evil man
Treading softly as he can

Spake he loftily in place;
A great light was on his face
'Listen King, of thy grace.'

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[1]Nicoll, Lit.Anec.of 19th century,vol.II.p.294.

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I am Tristram, Roland's son;
By thy might my lands were won,
All my lovers were undone.

Died by thee queen Blancheflour,
Mother mine in bitter hour,
That was white as any flower

Tho' they died not well aright,
Yet, for thou art belted Knight,
King Moronde, I bid thee fight."

It is more than evident from these lines that the author of this is not Swinburne the metrical artist; but it is not for this fact that the poem is interesting in the present discussion, but rather because it indicates at what an early period the plan of a poem on the Tristan story was conceived by Swinburne. It was the only poem contributed by Swinburne to the Undergraduates Papers and was doubtless his earliest poetical work, so the reader should regard the injunction which he gave in the letter already quoted: "If ever you do see these worthless rarities, please remember that they were literally a boy's work - legally an infant's." From whence the suggestion for the poem came it is impossible to say though the form of the names might be taken as evidence that

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it was not the old English "Sir Tristrem" or Malory, but more probably an old French romance.

Between the appearance of this first poem and the publication of "Tristram of Lyonesse" exactly a quarter of a century elapsed and during that time Swinburne had given ample evidence of his poetical powers. In "Tristram of Lyonesse" he does not attempt the ballad movement that he undertook to give to the earlier poem, but chooses the slower, more measured effect of the heroic couplet. The poem is divided into nine cantos of varying length, each of which is rather distinct and independent of the others. The nine cantos may be described as so many pictures each of which portrays the particular scene with which it is concerned with the coloring and effect appropriate to the subject. Such a method of narration has little in common with the simple direct style of the old romances, or later of Morte d'Arthur; the difference is that between an objective treatment, and a subjective conception of the story and characters, to use again these hackneyed terms. The delicately elaborated study of the emotional element in "Tristram of Lyonesse" marks it distinctly as the product of the last years of the nineteenth century; there is none of the naïve simplicity of the mediaeval story which in a purely secular romance such as that of Tris-

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tan, was concerned with action, with actual events and their consequences, and only with the inner life of the character as it found expression in action. The poem is an excellent example of a modern artistic method applied to a simple mediaeval romance; the poem is full of fine descriptive passages that show the poet's power at its best, particularly is this true of the descriptions of the sea. The use of the sea music as an accompaniment through the canto describing Iseult of Cornwall's night vigil at Tintagil is particularly effective. There is also much of the passionate intensity of emotion which characterizes Swinburne's earlier lyrical poems.

As to Swinburne's narrative method in this poem the criticism of John Addington Symonds may be quoted; he writes:[1] "He uses the actual narrative as a thread upon which to hang highly wrought descriptions of emotion and of nature, communicating the details of the story for the most part indirectly or by way of retrospect. He singles out the most important situations for special treatment, amplifying these with abundant dramatic power (as in the canto Iseult at Tintagel) or embroidering them with a rhetorical magnificence which sur-

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[1] Symonds Academy XXII. p.93.

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passes Ovid's art in Heroidum Epistolae. In fact he has chosen to present an epic to us in a series of brilliant pictures and elaborated studies."

In choosing his method of telling the story he has sacrificed accordingly whatever of mediaeval atmosphere could have been created by the style of narrative; on this point to quote from the same review, Symonds says:- "I am bound, for my part, to confess that in spite of the forcible reality with which Mr. Swinburne has set forth what is permanently human in this tale of passion, in spite of the pathos of the tragedy and the splendour of the psychological analysis, I feel here the same failure to combine things that differ - mediaeval material and modern artistic method - which is discernible to many readers in the 'Idylls of the King'."[1] From a consideration of the style and manner of treatment we can turn to the elements of the original story as they have been used by Swinburne.

The prelude to Tristram and Iseult was published independently and save for the last few lines is not directly connected with the poem, except as it has for its subject, love, "Love, that is first and last of all things made"; "Love, that is blood within the veins of time"; "Love, that the

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[1] Symonds Academy XXII. p.93.

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whole world's waters shall not drown"; and dead lovers of long ago, Helen, Guinevere, Dido, Juliet, Cleopatra, Francesca, Thisbe, and Iseult; their fate suggests to the poet that of the whole world and the result is one of the finest passages in the poem.

"They have the night, who had like us the day;
We, whom the day binds, shall have the night as they.
We, from the fetters of the light unbound,
Healed of our wound of living, shall sleep sound.
All gifts but one the jealous God may keep
From our soul's longing, one he cannot - sleep.
This, though he grudge all other grace to prayer.
This grace his closed hand cannot choose but spare.
This, though his ear be sealed to all that live,
Be it lightly given or lothly, God must give.
We, as the men whose name on earth is none,
We too shall surely pass out of the sun;
Out of the sound and eyeless light of things,
Wide as the stretch of life's time-wandering wings,
Wide as the naked world and shadowless,
And long-lived as the world's own weariness.
Us too, when all the fires of time are cold,
The heights shall hide us and the depths shall hold.

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Us too, when all the tears of time are dry,
The night shall lighten from her tearless eye.
Blind is the day and eyeless all its light,
But the large unbewildered eye of night
Hath sense and speculation; and the sheer
Limitless length of lifeless life and clear,
The timeless space wherein the brief worlds move
Clothed with light life and fruitful with light love,
With hopes that threaten, and with fears that cease,
Past fear and hope, hath in it only peace."

The first canto has the fanciful title "The Sailing of the Swallow", the Swallow being the name of the ship that brings Iseult of Ireland as Mark's bride to Cornwall; and the opening lines describe Iseult and her matchless beauty. In describing Tristram as he stands at the helm of the ship, the poet refers to the origin of his name in the following lines:

"And nothing save his name he had of grief,
The name his mother, dying as he was born,
Made out of sorrow in very sorrow's scorn,
And set it on him smiling in her sight,
Tristram."

In relating the incidents of the hero's past life Swinburne has the first voyage to Ireland the result of chance:-

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"And in mid change of time and fight and song
Chance cast him westward on the low sweet strand
Where songs are sung of the old green Irish land,"

There he comes to the court "like a mateless man" and teaches Iseult the "sweet craft of new things musical"; he is afterwards discovered to be the slayer of her uncle by the usual device of the piece of the broken sword, but is spared by the mercy of the Queen, and returns to Cornwall.

The second journey to Ireland to secure Iseult as Mark's bride follows the original legends. When Iseult is about to depart with Tristram the queen "lest some doom should come to pass, bethought her to work some charm with marvellous herbs and spells" and the result is the love-potion which is entrusted to the faithful Brangwain. In the course of the voyage, the poet has Tristram tell Iseult of the history of Arthur and the court, not a particularly happy conception, since the narrative is not one that seems quite suitable for the hearing of the young bride.

The scene leading up to the drinking of the love-potion is well "motivirt", the poet following the version of "Sir Tristrem" in which the hero becomes exhausted through the exertion of rowing;

"Then Tristram girt him for an oarsman's place

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And took his oar and smote, and toiled with might
In the east wind's full face and the strong sea's spite
Labouring; and all the rowers rowed hard, but he
More mightily than any wearier three."

. : . . . . . : . . . .

For Tristram being athirst with toil now spake,
Saying,'Iseult,for all dear love's labour's sake
Give me to drink, and give me for a pledge
The touch of four lips on the beaker's edge.'
And Iseult sought and would not wake Brangwain
Who slept as one half dead with fear and pain,
Being tender-natured; . . . . .
And spying what strange bright secret charge was kept
Fast in that maid's white bosom while she slept,
She sought and drew the gold cup forth and smiled
Marvelling, with such light wonder as a child
That hears of glad sad life in magic lands;
And bare it back to Tristram with pure hands
Holding the love-draught that should be for flame
To burn out of them fear and faith and shame,
And lighten all their life up in men's sight,
And make them sad for ever."

The second canto "The Queen's Pleasance" follows the

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Tristan stories regarding the marriage of Mark and Iseult, and the deceiving of the king by the substitution of Brangwain. In the episode of the harper who wins Iseult from the king, Swinburne gives the minstrel's name as Palamede, who in Malory is the knight that accomplishes the same end by a different strategem; evidently a combination of the two forms of the story.

The third canto "Tristram in Brittany" takes up the story after three years had elapsed, the intervening events being narrated by way of retrospect in the fourth canto. The poet simply relates in the present instance that

"In barren ways and works of banishment,

. . . . . .

He came back to the strait of sundering sea
That parts green Cornwall from grey Brittany,
Where dwelt the high king's daughter of the lands,
Iseult, named alway from her fair white hands,
She looked on him and loved him;

. . . . . .

Yet . . he came a stranger in her sight,
A banished man and weary."

Unlike the other stories, Iseult of Brittany does not at once think that the Iseult whose name is ever on Tristram's lips

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is herself but that "Haply, This name of mine was worn of one long dead, Some sister that he loved", and pity adds to the love she already feels for him; a touch entirely Swinburne's own. The fourth canto - The Maiden Marriage - describes the marriage of Iseult of Brittany and Tristram; and follows the usual form of the story. Remembrance of Iseult of Ireland comes to Tristram on his marriage night, when he sees the ring that she had given him as a pledge of faith. As in "Sir Tristrem" the ring falls from his hand,("Tristrem ring fel away"), and it recalls his last meeting with Queen Iseult of their detection, how they were condemned to death, and of his miraculous escape from the chapel by leaping into the sea. These incidents are not found in the versions of the Thomas group, but appear in Beroul and Eilhart, and the prose romances, including Malory, from which latter Swinburne doubtless took this part of the story.

The following canto describing Iseult at Tintagel, while it does not advance the story is one of the most powerful of the whole poem. It furnishes an example of what has already been mentioned in this connection, of the highly wrought emotional passages becoming as in this canto dramatic. Iseult is pictured in the despair of her longing for Tristram, and the depth of her all-powerful love is vividly

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portrayed. The narrative is again taken up in the sixth canto entitled "Joyous Gard"; in general details it follows the usual form of the story; the exceptions are in such points as Ganhardine's mistaking Brangwain for Iseult, and and the one upon which the canto is particularly concerned, the loan of the Joyous Gard to Tristram and Iseult by Lancelot at Guinevere's suggestion; the latter trait is found in Malory, and the former in some of the French versions. The bringing of Guinevere and Iseult together as well as the description of Arthur's court in the first canto and other minor incidents, shows that Swinburne had before him Malory, or some of the Arthurian versions of the story, and selected such portions that brought the Tristan and Arthur stories together, as would best suit his purpose.

The material for the seventh canto is as far as is known, entirely Swinburne's own. It is known as "The Wife's Vigil" and describes the anger and grief of the deserted Iseult of Brittany. The opening lines give the key to the whole canto which is one of the shortest of the poem:-

"But all that year in Brittany forlorn,
More sick at heart with wrath than fear of scorn
And less in love with love than grief, and less
With grief than pride of spirit and bitterness,

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Till all the sweet life of her blood was changed
And all her soul from all her past estranged
And all her will with all itself at strife
And all her mind at war with all her life,
Dwelt the white-handed Iseult, maid and wife,
A mourner that for mourning robes had on
Anger and doubt and hate of things foregone."

This enlargement on the original theme has the effect of emphasizing the motive of jealousy as it appears in the scene of the black and white sails and the death of Tristram. There is again the psychological analysis of the mind alternately swayed by love, sorrow, pride and anger.

In the seventh canto the course of events is continued from the fifth and is closed with Tristram and Iseult at the Joyous Gard. From thence they are compelled to depart, Tristram to go to the rescue of Triamour in his struggle against Urgan, and Iseult to return to King Mark who "at Arthur's hand required her back restored." The struggle against the giant Urgan is transplanted by Swinburne from its original place, in the other versions where it was supposed to have happened before Tristram's first journey to Brittany. Nothing is gained by the transposition, though if this incident was to be given, this was the best opportunity that

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the poet had to do so. The description of the combat between the giant and Tristram is vividly told, and in many of its details suggests the fight between Beowulf and Grendel in the old English epic.

". . . lightly Tristram swerved, and drove
Right in on him, whose void stroke only clove
Air, and fell wide, thundering athwart: and he
Sent forth a stormier cry than wind or sea
When midnight takes the tempest for her lord;
And all the glen's throat seemed as hell's that roared;
But high like heaven's light over hell shone Tristram's sword,
Falling, and bright as storm shows God's bare brand
Flashed as it shore sheer off the huge right hand
Whose strength was as the shadow of death on all that land.
And like the trunk of some grim tree sawn through
Reeled Urgan, as his left hand grasped and drew
A steel by sorcerers tempered: . . .
. . and even as with the storm-wind's might
On Tristram's helm that sword crashed: and the knight
Fell, and his arms clashed, and a wide cry brake
From those far off that heard it, for his sake
Soul-stricken: . . .

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. : . . . . . .

They flashed again, re-risen: and swift and loud
Rang the strokes out as from a circling cloud,
So dense the dust wrought over them its drifted shroud.
Strong strokes, within the mist their battle made,
Each hailed on other through the shifting shade
That clung about them hurtling as the swift fight
swayed:
And each between the jointed corslet saw
Break forth his foe's bright blood at each grim flaw
Steel made in hammered iron: till again
The fiend put forth his might more strong for pain
And cleft the great knight's glittering shield in twain,
Laughing for very wrath and thirst to kill,
A beast's broad laugh of blind and wolfish will,
And smote again ere Tristram's lips drew breath
Panting, and swept as by the sense of death,
That surely would have touched and sealed them fast
Save that the sheer stroke shrilled aside, and passed
Frustrate: but answering Tristram smote anew,
And thrust the brute beast as with lightning through
Clean with one cleaving stroke of perfect might:
And violently the vast bulk leapt upright,

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And plunged over the bridge, and fell: and all
The cliffs reverberate from his monstrous fall
Rang:"

The battle won, Tristram as an exile turns from England and again seeks refuge in Brittany, where a young knight Tristram by name implores his aid in rescuing his lady love from the enemy's hands. Tristram at once takes up the cause and slays all of the robber-band, but the young Tristram is killed and the hero is struck by an arrow "full in the wound's print of his great first fight." At least two of the minor details seem to indicate that Swinburne had "Sir Tristrem" before him in writing this part of the story; he mentions the young Tristram as "a knight with feet unshod" and in Sir Tristrem he is described as "a knight pat werd no schon", a detail that is peculiar to the latter version and not found in the French (Douce MS.349) where he is spoken of as "Tristran le naim" or in the Saga. Again the idea that Tristram's second wound was in the same place as the first, does not appear in the French fragment or in the Saga, in both places it being caused by a poisoned sword; the last lines of "Sir Tristrem"

"Ac an aruwe oway he bare
In his eld wounde" evidently was the basis of the line

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in Tristram of Lyonesse already quoted. The canto closes with a description of Tristram as he is brought to his castle in Brittany to Iseult of the White Hands.

The title of the last canto "The Sailing of the Swan" has something of the fanciful suggestiveness of that of the first; as it was the "Swallow" lightly skimming over the water that brought the light-hearted Iseult from Ireland; so it is the "Swan", an omen as it were with its dying song, that brings Iseult on the last voyage to Tristram. The closing scenes follow the usual version of the story. Tristram after suffering "Three dim days through, three slumberless nights long" in desperation, commissions Ganhardine to go to Cornwall, for Queen Iseult. Tristram gives Ganhardine Iseult's ring that he had worn so long and which had played such an important part in other incidents of the story. He also gives Ganhardine directions concerning the black and white sails on the return voyage:-

"But make thee two sails, one like sea-foam white
To spread for signal if thou bring her back,
And if she come not see the sail be black,
That I may know or ever thou take land
If these my lips may die upon her hand
Or hers may never more be mixed with mine."

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According to Swinburne Ganhardine is welcomed by King Mark, and unbeknown to him the ring is given to the queen in a golden cup. The Norse version relates that the messenger appeared disguised as a merchant who in displaying his wares succeeds in giving Iseult the ring and Tristram's message. In Eilhart it is not Ganhardine (who had been killed previously) but a servant who goes on the errand, and no mention is made of the ring. In "Tristram of Lyonesse" the queen recognizes the ring at once and secretly joins Ganhardine, on the Swan at night, the "snowbright sails" are hoisted and the ship "took the glimmering sea".

The scene is then shifted to Brittany and Tristram is pictured as he is waiting anxiously for the first tidings of the ship; and as in Arnold's poem, he dreams of the happy days of the past, though these scenes are not enlarged upon as in the former poem, where this is the device used to tell the story. Iseult of Brittany faithfully watches by his side in spite of her anger and jealousy; for she had overheard the message that was sent to Queen Iseult and "her heart waxed hot and every word, Thereon seemed graven and printed in her thought." The setting of the scene, as in Arnold, is chosen to heighten the effect; the moaning of the wind and the roar of the wintry sea come as the undertone through

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these closing scenes. Tristram in the anxiety of his suffering abandons hope of seeing Iseult again and sighs:-

"So might the wind wail if the world were dead
And its wings wandered over nought but sea.
I would I knew she would not come to me,
For surely she will not come: then should I,
Once knowing I shall not look upon her, die."

. . . . . .

"Then softly spake his watching virgin wife
Out of her heart, deep down below her breath:
'Fear not but death shall come - and after death
Judgment.'"

The closing scene in the story is briefly described by Swinburne. At dawn the ship appears and Iseult says:-

". . 'Ay, the ship comes surely; but her sail is black.'
And fain he would have sprung upright, and seen,
And spoken: but strong death struck sheer between,
And darkness closed as iron round his head:
And smitten through the heart lay Tristram dead.
And scarce the word had flown abroad, and wail
Risen, ere to shoreward came the snowbright sail,
And lightly forth leapt Ganhardine on land,
And led from ship with swift and reverent hand

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Iseult: and round them up from all the crowd
Broke the great wail for Tristram out aloud.
And ere her ear might hear her heart had heard,
Nor sought she sign for witness of the word;
But came and stood above him newly dead,
And felt his death upon her: and her head
Bowed, as to reach the spring that slakes all drouth;
And their four lips became one silent mouth."

Swinburne does not make use of the poetical story of the ivy and rose that were planted upon the graves and that grew and intertwined. Their last resting place is a chapel which was afterwards destroyed.

"For the strong sea hath swallowed wall and tower"

and

. : . . . . . "none shall say,
Here once, or here, Tristram and Iseult lay:
But peace they have that none may gain who live,
And rest about them that no love can give,
And over them, while death and life shall be,
The light and sound and darkness of the sea."

The sea as it is made to reflect the coloring of the events of the story, is ever present as in the last scene, and gives occasion for some of the finest descriptive pas-

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sages, as has already been noted.

The three modern English poems on the Tristan saga that have been considered, show a great diversity in the manner of treating the story. To Tennyson it is but a part of a larger plan, and in incorporating the Idylls he has found it necessary to make such radical changes in the original legend that it loses the all-important motive upon which the whole story is built - the love-potion. Under these circumstances it can scarcely be regarded as a serious attempt to give an adequate version of the saga. Arnold taking the story as a subject of an independent poem was under no restrictions but was at liberty to treat the legends as he saw fit. As it was he also chose to modify the original material very considerably, not in such vital points as did Tennyson, but still in such a manner that his version no longer harmonizes with the more familiar forms of the legends. The faithfulness of Tristram to Iseult even in his marriage with Iseult of the White Hands, which was such an essential part of the fate ordained love of the two, is put to nought by Arnold's version of the story. By omitting the story of the black and white sails, one of the most dramatic scenes of the old story, is lost, and the light which it throws on the character of Iseult of the White Hands is lacking. The last part

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of the poem which is taken up with the patient, long-suffering Iseult as she wanders by the sea with her children and tells them the story of Merlin comes as an anticlimax, after the tragic death of the two lovers. As has already been noted the tone of this part of the poem is decidedly modern and does not add to the effectiveness of the whole.

With Swinburne the Tristan saga from a romance of adventure becomes the basis of a study of emotion; the naïve, mediaeval and objective manner of treatment, gives way to the modern psychological and analytical study of character. The details of the old legends are preserved intact for the most part though detailed treatment of episodes is omitted. There seems to be no effort to infuse any of the mediaeval spirit into "Tristram of Lyonesse"; and the modern treatment would have made very difficult, if not impossible, such an effort. These remarks should not be construed as belittling Swinburne's work for the poem is well conceived and contains many fine descriptive and even dramatic passages. The question with which we are particularly concerned in this place is how successfully the original material has been treated. As a re-vivifying of the old legends the poem can scarcely be regarded as a success, for the atmosphere which is so essential in a work of this kind is not created for the reader.

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The fact that three of the greatest poets of the 19th. century have undertaken to treat the Tristan saga in whole or part and in the concensus of opinion have not given the world poems of high rank, suggests the question whether the story of Tristan and Iseult is well suited to be the subject of a modern poem or poetical romance. John Addington Symonds in reviewing Swinburne's "Tristram of Lyonesse" is inclined to answer the question in the negative, he writes, "It is a matter open to debate whether this episode of the Arthurian cycle is a fit subject for modern verse. Some of its details are too crude for any but a simple and naïf treatment; and the incident of the love-potion, by which alone the passion is justified and rendered tragic, makes too large a demand upon the credulity of the 19th. century. : . . .There are some insurmountable difficulties for a modern poet in the story of Tristram and Iseult ."[1] A writer in the Saturday Review in a criticism of the poem takes practically the same position when he says, "It seems a bold, perhaps foolhardy thing to say, but we do not think the story of Tristran and Iseult a good subject for a modern poetical romance."[2]

It is doubtless true that the legend presents great if

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[1]Academy 22, p.93. [2]Saturday Review, 54, p.156.

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not insurmountable difficulties if this romantic story is to be transferred from its "antique soil into the garden of modern thought" for as has been said its leading motive does not conform to modern ideas; but this it would scarcely seem would preclude its successful treatment in modern poetry; since the alternative of preserving the spirit of the original and the mediaeval setting is not impossible. That the poets who have treated the story have not been most successful in restoring the mediaeval life and feeling does not necessarily mean that it cannot be done. William Morris, or perhaps Rossetti, of all modern poets, would seem best fitted to treat the story and treat it successfully, for they more than any others became completely imbued with the spirit of the Middle Age. But whether the story is to be successfully and adequately treated in modern times, it certainly remains one of the most tragic in history and romance; "a story that might test the tragic strength and eloquence of any poet in any age of the world."[1]

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[1]Ker, Epic and Romance, p.393.

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Appendix A.

The indications of the popularity of the Tristan saga in the Middle Ages are not confined to literature, but are to be found in works of fine art and even in official documents. One of the most interesting of the latter is found in an announcement of King John in 1207 that he has received from Germany as a coronation gift two swords one of which was that of Tristan. The documant to be found in Rymer Foedera is in part as follows:-

"Sciatis quod nos recipimus, sabbati proximo post festum Sancti Nicholi apud Clarendum anno regni nostri IX per manus Hugonia de Rappell . . . . magnam coronam quae venit de Almannia; . . . virgam auream cum columba in summo & ij enses, scilicet ensem Tristrami & alium ensem de eodem regali. . "[1]

The chronicler Galvaneo Fiamma relates in the year 1339, that the fall of a tree led to the discovery of a tomb in a monastery in Italy in which was found the body of one of the Kings of the Lombards and at his side was the sword of Tristan; the description of it is as follows:-

"A latere erat unus ensis habens dentem in acie satis

- -

[1]Rymer's Foedera (Royal Com.Ed.) vol.I.ch.I.p.99.

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magnum qui fuerat Tristantis de Lyonas, cum quo interfecerat Lamorath Durlanth. Unde in pomo ensis sic erat scriptum

'Cel est l'espec de Meser Tristant
un il ocist Lamorogt de Vrlant'."[1]

On the walls of the Castle Runkelstein at Bozen in Tyrol are a series of frescoes the subjects of which are the episodes of the Tristan saga; they date from the 15th. century and were probably inspired by Gottfried's poem.[2]

There are also tapestries of the 14th. century in the convent of Wienhausen at Celle and embroideries of the 15th. century found in the cathedral of Erfurt, in which scenes from the story are portrayed, that agree with the Eilhart version.[3] An ivory casket in a private collection in England is carved to represent scenes of the story and is probably of German origin.[4]

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[1]Romania, vol. XVI. p.295. [2]Pfeiffer's Germania, vol. II p.467. [3]Bechstein ed. Gottfried's Tristan, p.XVI.
[4]Gentleman's Mag. N.S. vol.III.p.198.

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